

# Imperial Guards

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# Chapter 1

## Imperial Guard



*The commander of the Imperial Guard of Delhi*

An **imperial guard** or **palace guard** is a special group of troops (or a member thereof) of an empire, typically closely associated directly with the Emperor or Empress. Usually these troops embody a more elite status than other imperial forces, including the regular armed forces, and maintain

special rights, privileges and traditions.

Because the head of state often wishes to be protected by the best soldiers available, their numbers and organisation may be expanded to carry out additional tasks. Napoleon's Imperial Guard is an example of this. Some empires maintained guard units, such as the British Empire, which still exist.

In the post-colonial period, the term has been used colloquially and derisively to describe the staff of a person, usually a politician or corporate executive officer, that acts to prevent direct communication with the person.

### 1.1 List of Imperial Guards

- Somatophylakes, bodyguards of Alexander the Great.
- Persian Immortals aka **Immortal Guards**:
  - The Persian Immortals, existing in Persia under the Achaemenean dynasty
  - Immortals (Byzantine), established under the Byzantine emperor Michael VII
  - The Immortals, the Iranian Imperial Guard, existing in Persia and Iran in the 20th century under the Pahlavi dynasty
  - The Immortals, Nihang warriors or Sikh Akalis who have played the pivotal role in Sikh military history
- Praetorian Guard of the Roman Empire, from around 27 B.C. until 312 A.D.
- Jovians and Herculians, elite Guards legions during the Tetrarchy
- Scholae Palatinae, late Roman Imperial Guards in both Western and Eastern Empires. Established in ca. 312, in the West until the 490s, in Byzantine service until ca. 1080.

- The Northern Army of the Han Dynasty was the standing professional army branch of the Han Empire, garrisoned around the capital. Several units from this army would be given the honor of guarding the emperor in the capitol.
- Excubitors, Byzantine imperial guards established under the Byzantine emperor Leo I the Thracian
- Spatharioi, Byzantine palace guards in the 5th-8th centuries
- Tagmata, elite Byzantine guard units (8th century-11th century)
- Hetaireia, Byzantine mercenary guard composed of men from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. (9th-12th centuries)
- The Great Mona'spa Guard was an elite sub branch of the Kingdom of Georgia royal guard, which itself was an elite formation of the Georgian king's army.
- Varangian Guard of the Byzantine Empire
- Alemannic Guard of Emperor of the Serbs Stefan Uroš IV Dušan the Mighty.
- Janissaries of the Ottoman Empire
- Imperial Guards (Tang Dynasty), formed initially as honour bodyguards of the emperor and garrison of the capital, and evolved to reflect the era's transition of reliance on professional soldiery over non-professional volunteers and conscripts.
- Imperial Guards Brigade of Manchu Banner soldiers, entrusted with guarding the person of the Emperor of China and the Forbidden City during the Qing dynasty
- Imperial Guard of Manchukuo
- Imperial Guard of Napoleon I and the First French Empire
- Imperial Guard (Napoleon III) of the Second French Empire
- Russian Imperial Guard, also known as the Leib Guard, of the Russian Emperor
- Gardekorps of the German Empire
- Imperial Guard of Japan
- Esho of the Oyo Empire
- Kebur Zabangna (Ethiopian empire)
- Kheshig of the Mongol Empire
- The Household Division of the United Kingdom

## 1.2 Fiction

The term has been used in fiction:

- Imperial Guard, a group of alien warriors in the Marvel Comics universe that are charged with the duty of serving the Shi'ar Empire.
- Emperor's Royal Guard, Emperor Palpatine's personal protectors in the Star Wars universe.
- The Imperial Guard (*Warhammer 40,000*), the army of the Imperium in the *Warhammer 40,000* tabletop miniature wargame.
- The Crimson Brigade, the Empire of Izmir's elite fighting unit in the 2000 film titled: "Dungeons & Dragons".
- The Sardaukar of the Padishah Emperor and the Freemen Fedaykin of Paul Muad'dib, plus their successors the Fish Speakers both serve as imperial guards in Frank Herbert's *Dune* (novel).
- The Imperial Guard of the planet Andor as seen on the TV series *Star Trek: Enterprise*

## 1.3 See also

- List of empires
- List of largest empires
- List of extinct countries, empires, etc.
- Imperialism
- Colonialism
- Royal Guard
- Republican Guard (disambiguation)
- National Guard (disambiguation)

## 1.4 External links

# Chapter 2

## Somatophylakes

*Somatophylakes* (Greek: Σωματοφύλακες; singular: *somatophylax*, σωματοφύλαξ), in its literal English translation from Greek, means “bodyguards” .

The most famous body of *somatophylakes* were those of Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great. They consisted of seven men, drawn from the Macedonian nobility, who also acted as high-ranking military officers, holding command positions such as general or chiliarch. Alexander the Great appointed Peucestas as eighth *somatophylax* after the siege of Malli.

### 2.1 *Somatophylakes* of Alexander the Great

336–334

- Aristonous of Pella, Lysimachus, Peithon, Arybbas, Balacrus, Demetrius, Ptolemy.

333,

- Aristonous, Lysimachus, Peithon, Arybbas, Balacrus, Demetrius, Hephaestion, Ptolemy.

332

- Aristonous, Lysimachus, Peithon, Arybbas, Menes, Demetrius, Hephaestion.

331

- Aristonous, Lysimachus, Peithon, Leonnatus, Menes, Demetrius, Hephaestion.

330–327

- Aristonous, Lysimachus, Peithon, Leonnatus, Perdiccas, Ptolemy I Soter, Hephaestion.

326–324

- Aristonous, Lysimachus, Peithon, Leonnatus, Perdiccas, Ptolemy I Soter, Hephaestion, Peucestas

323

- Aristonous, Lysimachus, Peithon, Leonnatus, Perdiccas, Ptolemy I Soter, Peucestas.

### 2.2 See also

- Companion Cavalry

### 2.3 External links

- Livius.org - *Somatophylax*

# Chapter 3

## Immortals (Persian Empire)



*Immortals at the 2,500th anniversary of Persia in ceremonial dress.*

The "Immortals" (from the Greek Αθάνατοι, sometimes "Ten Thousand Immortals" or "Persian Immortals") was the name given by Herodotus to an elite force of soldiers who fought for the Achaemenid Empire. This force performed the dual roles of both Imperial Guard and standing army during the Persian Empire's expansion period and during the Greco-Persian Wars. Its Persian name may have been Anūšiya ('companions' perhaps confused with Anauša 'immortals' from *an-* 'non' + *auša* 'death').\*[1] The force consisted mainly of Persians but also included Medes and Elamites.\*[2]

### 3.1 Herodotus

Herodotus describes the 'Immortals' as being heavy infantry, led by Hydarnes, that were kept constantly at a strength of exactly 10,000 men. He claimed that the unit's name stemmed from the custom that every killed, seriously wounded, or sick member was immediately replaced with a new one, maintaining the numbers and cohesion of the unit.\*[3]

This elite corps is only called the 'Immortals' in sources based on Herodotus. There is evidence of the existence of a permanent corps from Persian sources, which provided a backbone for the tribal levies who made up the bulk of

the Achaemenid armies. These do not however record the name of "Immortals".\*[1] "Probably, Herodotus' informant has confused the name Anūšiya ('companions') with Anauša ('Immortals')." \* [1]

### 3.2 History

The Immortals played an important role in Cyrus the Great's conquest of Babylon in 539 BC, Cambyses II's conquest of Egypt in 525 BC and Darius I's invasion of India's smaller western frontier kingdoms (western Punjab and Sindh, now in Pakistan) and Scythia in 520 BC and 513 BC. Immortals participated in the Battle of Thermopylae 480 BC\*[4] and were amongst the Persian occupation troops in Greece in 479 BC under Mardonius.

### 3.3 Equipment



*Immortals at war against Alexanders' troops. Color reconstruction of the original reliefs on the Alexander Sarcophagus, in Istanbul*

Herodotus describes their armament as follows: wicker shields, short spears, swords or large daggers, bow and arrow. Underneath their robes they wore scale armour coats. The spear counterbalances of the common soldiery were of silver; to differentiate commanding ranks, the officers' spear buttspikes were golden.\*[5] The regiment was followed by a caravan of covered carriages, camels, and mules that transported their supplies, along with concubines and

attendants to serve them; this supply train carried special food that was reserved only for their consumption.\* [6]

The headdress worn by the Immortals is believed to have been the Persian tiara. Its actual form is uncertain, but some sources describe it as a cloth or felt cap which could be pulled over the face to keep out wind and dust in the arid Persian plains.\* [5] Surviving Achaemenid coloured glazed bricks and carved reliefs represent the Immortals as wearing elaborate robes, hoop earrings and gold jewelry, though these garments and accessories were most likely worn only for ceremonial occasions.\* [7]

## 3.4 Legacy

### 3.4.1 Sassanid Empire

Main article: Zhaydan

The title of “Immortals” was first revived under the



Median (left) and Persian (right) soldiers, carvings at Persepolis.

Sassanid army. The most famous of the Savaran units were the Zhaydan (Immortals) and numbered 10,000 men, like

the Achaemenid predecessors, with the difference that they were cavalry. Their task was mainly to secure any breakthroughs and to enter battles at crucial stages.

### 3.4.2 Byzantine Empire

Main article: Immortals (Byzantine Empire)

The designation “Immortal” to describe a military unit was used twice during the Byzantine Empire, first as an elite heavy cavalry unit under John I Tzimiskes (r. 969–976) and then later by Nikephoritzes, the chief minister of Emperor Michael VII (r. 1071–1081), as the core of a new central field army, following the disastrous defeat of Manzikert by the Seljuk Turks in 1071.

### 3.4.3 French Empire

Main article: Imperial Guard (Napoleon I)

Many centuries later, during the Napoleonic Wars, French soldiers referred to Napoleon's Imperial Guard as “the Immortals.”\* [8]

### 3.4.4 Imperial State of Iran

Main article: Imperial Guard (Iran)

The Iranian Army under the last Shahanshah included an all volunteer Javidan Guard, also known as the “Immortals” after the ancient Persian royal guard. The “Immortals” were based in the Lavizan Barracks in Tehran. By 1978 this elite force comprised a brigade of 4,000–5,000 men, including a battalion of Chieftain tanks. Following the Iranian Revolution of 1979 the “Immortals” were disbanded.\* [9]

## 3.5 In popular culture

Herodotus' account of two warrior elites - the Spartan hoplites and the Immortals - facing each other in battle has inspired a set of rather colorful depictions of the battle, especially in regard of the Immortals:

- In the 1962 film *The 300 Spartans* the Immortals carry a spear and wicker shields like the actual Immortals. However, they are mostly dressed in black and other dark colors, as opposed to historical depictions.\* [9]

- Frank Miller's 1998 comic book *300*, and the 2006 feature film adapted from it, present a heavily fictionalized version of the Immortals at the Battle of Thermopylae. These Immortals wear Mengu-style metal masks, appear to be inhuman or disfigured, and carry a pair of swords closely resembling Japanese wakizashis.\*[9]
- The History Channel documentary *Last Stand of the 300* also features the Immortals as part of the reconstruction of the Thermopylae battle. In this version, the tiara the Immortals habitually wear is depicted here as a full-face black cloth mask transparent enough to see through.\*[9]

## 3.6 References

- [1] Lendering, Jona, *Immortals, Greek name for an elite regiment in the ancient Achaemenid empire*, Iran Chamber Society
- [2] <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/587087/Ten-Thousand-Immortals>
- [3] Jona Lendering. “The Persian Immortals” . *Ancient Persia*. Retrieved 6 September 2009.
- [4] Jona Lendering. “Thermopylae” . *Ancient Persia*. Retrieved 6 September 2009..
- [5] . Retrieved 16 May 2009.
- [6] Cook, J.M. *The Persian Empire*. New York: Schocken Books, 1983. Page 105.
- [7] Volume IX, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Fifteenth Edition 1983
- [8] Georges Blond, *La Grande Armée*, trans. Marshall May (New York: Arms and Armor, 1997), 48, 103, 470
- [9] Rastani, Nabil (27 October 2010). "The Guards of the Shahanshah, How to fight, carry weapons, ride horses and learn archery".

## 3.7 External links

- Persian Immortals
- *The Guards of the Shahanshah, How to fight, carry weapons, ride horses and learn archery*
- Immortals Entry at Encyclopaedia Iranica

# Chapter 4

## Immortals (Byzantine Empire)

The **Immortals** (Greek: Ἀθάνατοι, *Athanatoi*) were one of the elite *tagmata* military units of the Byzantine Empire, first raised during the late 10th century. The name derives from *a-* ("without") + *thanatos* ("death").

### 4.1 History

The *Athanatoi* were a body of young men of noble status that was originally raised by John I Tzimiskes (r. 969–976) in 970 for his war with the Rus', where they played a decisive role in the battles before Preslav and during the Siege of Dorostolon.\* [1]\* [2] The unit was commanded by a *domestikos*, as with most of the other *tagmata*, and on campaign camped near the imperial bodyguard, the *Hetaireia*.\* [1] The contemporary historian Leo the Deacon describes the *Athanatoi* as heavily armoured shock cavalry, "sheathed in armour" or as "armed horsemen adorned with gold".\* [3] Tzimiskes' unit was probably disbanded shortly after his death, since it does not appear again in the sources.\* [1]

The name of the *Athanatoi* was revived under the Emperor Michael VII (r. 1071–1078), when his minister Nikephoritzes reorganised the army.\* [1] This reorganisation was part of an effort to address a major military crisis for the Empire following the disastrous defeat suffered by the Byzantines against the Seljuk Turks at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071. The Seljuks had subsequently overrun most of Asia Minor, which had provided the main recruiting ground for the pre-Manzikert army. As part of the reorganisation process, the remnants of the provincial troops of the Eastern *themata* (military provinces) were brought together as the Immortals, providing a new Tagmatic regiment. The new Immortals may have been cavalry, like the bulk of the old Byzantine field army, but this is not certain.

Contemporary documents seem to place the *Athanatoi* among other foreign contingents, but modern scholars usually consider the unit to have been composed of native Byzantines.\* [1] The Byzantine historian Nikephoros

Bryennios the Younger records that the Immortals numbered 10,000, but this is most likely an allusion to the old Persian Immortal Guard.\* [4] The new unit fought under the future emperor Alexios I Komnenos in the Battle of Kalavrye (1078) against the rebel general Nikephoros Bryennios the Elder,\* [5] and are mentioned in the wars against the Pechenegs in the 1090s, but disappear thereafter, alongside with another contemporary creation, the *Archontopouloi*.\* [6]

### 4.2 Literary references

In Walter Scott's novel "Count Robert of Paris" the Immortals appear as rivals to the Viking or Anglo-Saxon Varangian Guard for Imperial favour.

### 4.3 References

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- [2] Talbot & Sullivan 2005, pp. 38, 42.
- [3] Talbot & Sullivan 2005, p. 38.
- [4] "Byzantine Armies, 886–1118", Ian Heath & Angus McBride, ISBN 0-85045-306-2
- [5] Birkenmeier 2002, p. 58.
- [6] Birkenmeier 2002, p. 159.

### 4.4 Sources

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# Chapter 5

## Imperial Guard (Iran)

The **Iranian Imperial Guard** was both the personal guard force of the Shahs of Iran and an elite combat branch of the Imperial Iranian Army. It was created in 1942 and disbanded in 1979.

### 5.1 Origins



Iranian Historical Photographs Gallery : [www.fouman.com](http://www.fouman.com)

#### Imperial Guard Headquarters in Tehran

In 1921 a Persian Royal Guard was in existence comprising 20,000 men. A Guard Division was raised in 1925, incorporating both cavalry and infantry units.

The Imperial Guard was subsequently formed in 1942 from 700 volunteers. It was originally designed and organized by General Jafar Shafaghat. The division was modeled af-

ter the Republican Guard of France and the British Royal Horse Guards.

In 1953 the unit was expanded in size to a division under General Teymur Bakhtar. In 1972 the Lashkari Guard Division was incorporated in the Imperial Guard together with a Conscript Brigade.

### 5.2 Structure

#### 5.2.1 Javidan Guard

The core of the Imperial Guard was the all volunteer **Javidan Guard** (*Gârd e Jâvidân*, Persian: **Immortal Guard**), better known as the “Immortals” after the ancient Persian royal guard or Persian Immortals. The “Immortals” were based in the Lavizan Barracks in northern Tehran.<sup>[1]</sup> By 1978 this elite force comprised a brigade of 4,000-5,000 men, including a battalion of Chieftain tanks. It was responsible for the internal and external security of the royal palaces. A special plain-clothes unit was called Ma'mourin Makhsous.

Prior to the 1967 Imperial Coronation a Pahlavi Cavalry Guard was formed, giving the Javidan Guard a Household Cavalry-type component. This mounted unit was 50-strong. The last Commanding Officer of the Javidan Guard was Lieutenant-Colonel Yusuf-i-nijad.

#### 5.2.2 Main Imperial Guard

By the late 1970s the entire Imperial Guard (including conscripts outside the Javidan units) was 18,000 strong, with artillery, armored and helicopter units. The entire Guard comprised some 6% of the army, and were the only troops stationed permanently in the capital Tehran.

## 5.3 Recruitment

A recruit to the Imperial Guard had to pass a series of proficiency tests, varying in subjects and difficulty. Reportedly one of the prerequisites for initiation was to be able to recite one's family history back for 23 generations from memory alone.

## 5.4 Uniforms and insignia

Imperial Guard units were distinguished by salmon (light red) coloured insignia. The Pahlavi Cavalry Guard had special blue and red ceremonial uniforms, including silver cuirasses and crested helmets.

## 5.5 Overthrow of the Shah

The Imperial Guard remained loyal to Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi until his departure for exile in January 1979. After two days of fighting on 9 through 11 February with armed civilians and dissident air force and army personnel the Imperial Guard was withdrawn to its bases. The Guards was disbanded on 17 February 1979.\*[2] The Javidan Guard was formally dissolved by the new Iranian regime, although some portions of the wider Imperial Guard remained in existence. These remaining units were stripped of their historic privileges and duties and integrated into the 21st Division of the regular Islamic Republic of Iran Army. As such they saw action in the Iran-Iraq war.

## 5.6 Commanders of the Imperial Guard

The last commander of the Imperial Guard was Abdol Ali Badrei who was executed in the immediate aftermath of the Iranian revolution.\*[3] One of the former Guard commanders was General Gholam Ali Oveisi (1960-1965). One of the original commanders, General Jafar Shafagh, during the last months prior to the fall of the monarchy in 1979 was appointed by the Shah as the minister of defense (the literal translation of this post from Persian is minister of war) under Shapour Bakhtiar Cabinet until the fall of the regime.

## 5.7 References

[1] Liz Thurgood, Bakhtiar quits after losing army backing, *The Guardian*, 12 February 1979

[2] Roberts, Mark (January 1996). "Purge of the Monarchs" . *McNair Papers* (47-48). Retrieved 29 August 2013. – via Questia (subscription required)

[3] Sahimi, Mohammad (3 February 2010). "The Ten Days that Changed Iran" . *PBS*. Retrieved 31 July 2013.

## 5.8 External links

- <http://youtube.com/watch?v=ecYzlSijECQ> During a military parade.

# Chapter 6

## Nihang



A Nihang in the 1860s with a characteristically elaborate turban

The **Nihang** (Punjabi: ਨਿੱਹਾਂ) are an armed Sikh order.\*[1] They are also referred to as **Akali** (lit. “the eternal”). Nihang are believed to have originated either from Sahibzada Fateh Singh and the attire he wore\*[2] or from the “Akal Sena”(lit. The Army of the Eternal) started by Guru Hargobind.\*[3] Early Sikh military history was dominated by the Nihang, known for their victories where they were heavily outnumbered. Traditionally known for their bravery and ruthlessness in the battlefield, the Nihang once formed the

guerrilla squads of the armed forces of Ranjit Singh.

### 6.1 Etymology

The word *Nihang* comes from the Persian word for a mythical sea creature (Persian: نهنگ).\*[4] The term owes its origin to Mughal historians, who compared the ferocity of the Akali with that of crocodiles.\*[5]

### 6.2 Arms and attire

Traditional Nihang dress is known as *Shiva Swarupa* meaning “Shiva's appearance”. This comprises full attire of superelectric blue,\*[6] edged bracelets of iron round their wrists (*jangi kara*) and quoits of steel (*chakram*) tiered in their lofty conical blue turbans, together with the traditional sword carried by all baptised Sikhs (*kirpan*).\*[7] When fully armed a Nihang will also bear one or two swords (either the curved *talwar* or the straight *khanda*) on his right hip, a *katara* (dagger) on his left hip, a buckler made from buffalo-hide (*dhala*) on his back, a large *chakram* around his neck, and an iron chain. In times of war, arms worn on the Nihang's person would generally be reserved until the warrior lost the weapon he held, often a bow or spear (*barsha*). Armour consisted of *sanjo* or iron chainmail worn under an iron breastplate (*char aina*). Nihang war-shoes (*jangi mojeh*) were constructed of iron at the toe, making their pointed toes capable of inflicting cuts and stab wounds.

The Nihang were particularly famous for their high turbans (*dastar bunga*) and their extensive use of the *chakram* or war-quoit. Their turbans were often pointed at the top and outfitted with a trishula or trident which could be used for stabbing in close-quarters. Other times, the turbans would be armed with a *bagh naka* (iron claw) and one or several *chakram* to slice at an opponent's eyes. These steel-reinforced turbans, it was said, afforded enough protection so that there was no need for any other form of headgear.

Today, Nihang still wear miniature versions of five weapons (*pancha shastra*) in their turbans, namely the chakram, the khanda (sword), the *karud* (dagger), the kirpan and the *tir* (arrow).

### 6.3 Nihang today



A group of Nihang

Today, Nihang are accorded great respect and affection among the Sikh community worldwide. While the order is primarily ceremonial, they are duty-bound to defend their people and faith in times of war. On the festival of Hola Mohalla, Nihang gather in their thousands at Anandpur where they display their martial skills. Their fighting style, although formally called *shastara vidiya*, is more commonly known as gatka. In 2011, Nidar Singh claimed to be the only living master of pre-gatka shastara vidiya.\*[8]

### 6.4 Use of intoxicants

Some Nihang groups consume cannabis or bhang (ਭੰਗ) to help in meditation.\*[9] \*[10]\*[11] *Sukha* (ਸੁਖਾ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦ), “peace-giver”, is the term Nihang use to refer to it. It was traditionally crushed and taken as a liquid, or baked into cookies (ਪਕੜਾ) and eaten, especially during festivals like Hola Mohalla. It is never smoked, as this practice is forbidden in Sikhism.\*[12]

In 2001, Baba Santa Singh, the Jathedar of Budha Dal, along with 20 chiefs of Nihang sects, refused to accept the ban on consumption of *bhang* by the apex Sikh clergy.\*[13] Baba Santa Singh was excommunicated for helping the Indian congress government rebuild the Akal Takht in 1984\*[14]\*[15] he was replaced with Baba Balbir Singh, who shunned the consumption of *bhang*.\*[16]



Nihang at Anandpur, India.

According to a recent BBC article, “Many Nihangs also eat meat and drink alcohol which orthodox Sikhs disagree with. Traditionally they also drank bhang, an infusion of cannabis, to become closer with God” \*[17]



Nihang at Sirhind

### 6.5 See also

- Amrit Sanskar
- Damdami Taksal
- Dastar bunga
- Gatka
- Khalsa
- Langar
- Misls

## 6.6 Notes

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- [7] Mayled, Jon (2002). *Sikhism*. Heinemann. p. 23. ISBN 9780435336271.
- [8] Hegarty, Stephanie (2011-10-29). “BBC News - The only living master of a dying martial art”. Bbc.co.uk. Retrieved 2014-01-04.
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- [10] Hola Mohalla: United colours of celebrations,
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- Bhai Sahib Amrit Pal Singh 'Amrit' has presented well-researched articles on Nihangs on his website
- [www.Budhadal.com](http://www.Budhadal.com)

## 6.8 External links

- [Sikh Photography](#) Images of Nihangs by photographer Charles Meacham
- [Sarbloh.info](#)
- [Nihangsingh.org](#)
- [Nihang SGPC](#)
- [Photography of the daily lives of the Nihang Singhs of Punjab](#) by photographer Nick Fleming

# Chapter 7

## Praetorian Guard

The **Praetorian Guard** (Latin: *Praetoriani*) was a force of bodyguards used by Roman Emperors. The title was already used during the Roman Republic for the guards of Roman generals, at least since the rise to prominence of the Scipio family around 275 BC. The Guard was dissolved by Emperor Constantine I in the 4th century. They should not be confused with the Imperial Germanic bodyguard that provided close personal protection for the late Roman emperors, or with the personal Iberian bodyguards of Scipio Africanus and Augustus.

### 7.1 History

The term *Praetorian* derived from the hut of the commanding general or praetor of a Roman army in the field—the *praetorium*. They were an elite recruitment of Roman citizens and Latins. It was a habit of many Roman generals to choose from the ranks a private force of soldiers to act as guards of the tent or the person. They consisted of both infantry and cavalry. In time, this cohort came to be known as the *cohors praetoria*, and various notable figures possessed one, including Julius Caesar, Mark Antony and Augustus (Octavian). As Caesar discovered with the Legio X *Equestris*, a powerful unit more dangerous than its fellow legions was desirable in the field. When Augustus became the first ruler of the Roman Empire in 31 BC, he decided such a formation was useful not only on the battlefield but in politics also. Thus, from the ranks of the legions throughout the provinces, Augustus recruited the Praetorian Guard.

#### 7.1.1 Original form of the Guard

The group that was formed initially differed greatly from the later Guard, which came to be a vital force in the power politics of Rome. While Augustus understood the need to have a protector in the maelstrom of Rome, he was careful to uphold the Republican veneer of his regime. Thus he allowed only nine cohorts to be formed, originally of 500, then increased to 1,000 men each, and only three were kept



A Praetorian soldier from the 2nd century AD - retrieved in Pozzuoli (1800)

on duty at any given time in the capital. A small number of detached cavalry units (*turmae*, sing. *turma*) of 30 men each were also organized. While they patrolled inconspicuously in the palace and major buildings, the others were stationed in the towns surrounding Rome; no threats were possible from these individual cohorts. This system was not radically changed with the appointment by Augustus in 2 BC of two Praetorian prefects, Quintus Ostorius Scapula and Publius Salvius Aper, although organization and command were enhanced.

Through the machinations of their ambitious prefect, Lucius Aelius Sejanus, the Guard was brought from the Ital-

ian barracks into Rome itself. In 23, Sejanus convinced Tiberius to have the *Castra Praetoria* (the fort of the Praetorians) built just outside of Rome. One of these cohorts held the daily guard at the imperial palace switching roles in between patrols (most of the guard in the imperial palace had shifted roles from morning till evening). Henceforth the entire Guard was at the disposal of the emperors, but the rulers were now equally at the mercy of the Praetorians. The reality of this was seen in 31 when Tiberius was forced to rely upon his own *cohors praetoria* against partisans of Sejanus. Although the Praetorian Guard proved faithful to the aging Tiberius, their potential political power had been made clear.



### 7.1.2 Participation in wars

While campaigning, the Praetorians were the equal of any formation in the Roman Army. On the death of Augustus in 14 A.D., his successor, Tiberius, was faced with mutinies among both the Rhine and Pannonian legions. According to Tacitus, the Pannonian forces were dealt with by Tiberius' son Drusus, accompanied by two Praetorian cohorts, the Praetorian cavalry and some of the German bodyguard. The German mutiny was put down by Tiberius' stepson Germanicus, his intended heir, who then led the legions and detachments of the Guard in an invasion of Germany over the next two years. The Guard saw much action in 69, fighting well for Otho at the first battle of Bedriacum. Under Domitian and Trajan, the guard took part in wars from Dacia to Mesopotamia, while with Marcus Aurelius, years were spent on the Danubian frontier. Throughout the 3rd century, the Praetorians assisted the emperors in various campaigns.

### 7.1.3 Political role

Following the death of Sejanus, who was sacrificed for the *Donativum* (imperial gift) promised by Tiberius, the Guards began to play an increasingly ambitious and bloody game in the Empire. With the right amount of money, or at will, they assassinated emperors, bullied their own prefects, or turned on the people of Rome. In 41 Caligula was killed by conspirators from the senatorial class and from the Guard, along with his wife and daughter. The Praetorians placed his uncle Claudius on the throne, daring the Senate to oppose their decision.

During 69, the Year of the Four Emperors, after the emperor Galba failed to provide a donative for the Praetorians, they transferred their allegiance to Otho and assassinated the emperor. Otho acquiesced in the Praetorians' demands and granted them the right to appoint their own prefects, ensuring their loyalty. After defeating Otho, Vitellius dis-

Proclaiming Claudius Emperor, by Lawrence Alma-Tadema, oil on canvas, c. 1867. According to one version of the story of Claudius' ascension to the role of Emperor, members of the Praetorian Guard found him hiding behind a curtain in the aftermath of the murder of Caligula in 41, and proclaimed him emperor.

banded the guard and established a new one sixteen cohorts strong. Vespasian relied in the war against Vitellius upon the disgruntled cohorts the emperor had dismissed, and reduced the number of cohorts back to nine upon becoming emperor himself. As a further safeguard, he appointed his son, Titus as Praetorian Prefect.\* [1]

While the Guard had the power to make or break emperors, it had no role in government administration, unlike the personnel of the palace, the Senate, and the bureaucracy. Often after an outrageous act of violence, revenge by the new ruler was forthcoming. In 193, Didius Julianus purchased the Empire from the Guard for a vast sum, when the Guard auctioned it off after killing Pertinax. Later that year Septimius Severus marched into Rome, disbanded the Guard and started a new formation from his own Pannonian Legions. Unruly mobs in Rome fought often with the Praetorians in Maximinus Thrax's reign in vicious street battles.

In 271, Aurelian sailed east to destroy the power of Palmyra, Syria, with a force of legionary detachments, Praetorian cohorts, and other cavalry units. The Palmyrenes were easily defeated. This led to the orthodox view that Diocletian and his colleagues evolved the *sacer comitatus* (the field escort of the emperors), which included field units that utilized a selection process and command structure modeled after the old Praetorian cohorts, but was not of uniform composition and was much larger than a Praetorian cohort.

### 7.1.4 Guard's twilight years

In 284, Diocletian reduced the status of the Praetorians; they were no longer to be part of palace life, as Diocletian lived in Nicomedia, some 60 miles (100 km) from Byzantium in Asia Minor. Two new corps, the Ioviani and Herculiani (named after the gods Jove, or Jupiter, and Hercules, associated with the senior and junior emperor), replaced the Praetorians as the personal protectors of the emperors, a practice that remained intact with the tetrarchy. By the time Diocletian retired on May 1, 305, their *Castra Praetoria* seems to have housed only a minor garrison of Rome.

The final act of the Praetorians in imperial history started in 306, when Maxentius, son of the retired emperor Maximian, was passed over as a successor: the troops took matters into their own hands and elevated him to the position of emperor in Italy on October 28. Caesar Flavius Valerius Severus, following the orders of Galerius, attempted to disband the Guard but only managed to lead the rest of them in revolting and joining Maxentius. When Constantine the Great, launching an invasion of Italy in 312, forced a final confrontation at the Milvian Bridge, the Praetorian cohorts made up most of Maxentius' army; Maxentius was defeated and died on the field. Later in Rome, the victorious Constantine definitively disbanded the remnants of the Praetorian Guard. The soldiers were sent out to various corners of the Empire, and the *Castra Praetoria* were dismantled. For over 300 years they had served the Emperors of Rome, and the destruction of their fortress was a grand gesture, inaugurating a new age of imperial history and ending that of the Praetorians.

## 7.2 Relationships between emperors and their Guard

## 7.3 Organization and conditions of service

Around the time of Augustus (c. 5) each cohort of the Praetorians numbered 1,000 men, increasing to 1,500 men at some time. As with the normal legions, the body of troops actually ready for service was much smaller. Tacitus reports that the number of cohorts was increased to twelve from nine in 47. In 69 it was briefly increased to sixteen cohorts by Vitellius, but Vespasian quickly reduced it again to nine.<sup>\*[7]</sup> Finally in 101 their number was increased once more to ten, resulting in a force of 10,000 troops, whose status was at least elite.

The Praetorians received substantially higher pay<sup>\*[8]</sup> than

other Roman soldiers in any of the legions, on a system known as *sesquiplex stipendium*, or by pay-and-a-half. So if the legionaries received 250 denarii, the guards received 375 per annum. Domitian and Septimius Severus increased the *stipendium* (payment) to 1,500 denarii per year, distributed in January, May and September.

## 7.4 Rank and file

See the article *Praetorian prefect*, which also lists the incumbents of the post of *Praefectus praetorio* and covers the essentially civilian second life of the office, since ca 300, as administrator of the territorial circumscriptions known as praetorian prefectures.

## 7.5 In popular culture

The Praetorian Guard's red festoon helmet is used in the official unit insignia of the U.S. Air Force Presidential Honor Guard.<sup>\*[9]</sup>

In 1998 House Speaker Newt Gingrich, in relation to the secret service testifying to the independent prosecutor about Bill Clinton's involvement in the Lewinsky scandal, said: *We do not have an emperor, We do not have a Praetorian Guard.*<sup>\*[10]</sup>

The Praetorian Guard features in the 2000 film *Gladiator* and the TV-film *Age of Treason* (Columbia 1993).

The Praetorians are a regiment of the Imperial Guard in the tabletop game *Warhammer 40,000*. There are also Necron squads called 'Triarch Praetorians', which consist of elite warriors that are able to fly.

In the game *Fallout: New Vegas*, one of the factions, Caesar's Legion, uses a praetorian guard that are hand-picked. They are invited to the guard when they have served long enough and killed enough of Caesar's enemies to become centurions. The selectees must pick out a current member whom they believe is the weakest and challenge him to an unarmed fight to the death. If the invitee wins, he takes over the loser's position.

In the 2005 video game *Colosseum: Road to Freedom*, one of the featured characters is Laetus, the Praetorian Prefect implicated in Commodus' assassination.

The Praetorian Guard also features in the video game *Ryse: Son of Rome*, serving a fictionalized version of Nero.

The Guard's soldiers appear as infantry units in *Civilization IV*, *Total War: Rome II* and *Travian*.

Their title provides the name for the video game *Praetorians*.

In the video game series *Mass Effect* and its spin off movie *Mass Effect: Paragon Lost* the Praetorians are a powerful elite enemy unit serving the enemy faction “The Collectors” .

## 7.6 See also

- Germanic bodyguard
- Equites singulares Augusti
- Frumentarii
- Varangian Guard

## 7.7 Notes

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- [5] Bingham 1997, p. 122 and n. 13.
- [6] Suetonius, *The Lives of Twelve Caesars*, Life of Titus 6
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## 7.9 External links

- Protecting the Emperor - life in the Praetorian Guard
- Praetorian Guard image resource

# Chapter 8

## Jovians and Herculians



Shield pattern of the palatine legion of Herculiani seniores, according to the Notitia Dignitatum.



Shield pattern of the palatine legion of Ioviani seniores, according to the Notitia Dignitatum.

The **Jovians** (Latin: *Ioviani*) and **Herculians** (Latin: *Herculiani*) were the senior palatine imperial guard units of the Emperors of the late Roman Empire and the early Byzantine Empire from the 290s until the 7th century.

### 8.1 History

The name originated in the equation of the two co-emperors Diocletian and Maximian with the Roman gods Jove and Hercules. The old-established Praetorian Guard was based at the *Castra Praetoria* in Rome, and had frequently proved disloyal, making and deposing emperors and even on one occasion in 193 putting the Imperial throne up for auction to the highest bidder (cf: Didius Julianus). Thus Diocletian, who ruled from Nicomedia, promoted two faithful legions from the Illyricum (Legio V *Iovia* and VI *Herculia*), the area he was also descended from, to be the personal protectors of the Roman Emperors.\*[1] On their promotion, the two old legions were renamed *Ioviani* and *Herculiani*.\*[1] The Praetorian Guard continued to exist until its abolition by Constantine I in ca. 312, and replaced as the imperial guard by the *Scholae Palatinae*. The two legions however continued to be counted among the senior units of the army, and after its division between East and West, they too were divided.

In the late 4th century document *Notitia Dignitatum*, they are listed, for the West (bearing the title *seniores*), as directly under the command of the *magister peditum*,\*[2] and for the East (the *iuniores*, junior to their counterparts in the West), as being under the command of the *magister militum praesentalis*.\*[3] In 398, the Jovians and Herculians of the West were part of the small body that invaded Africa Province and suppressed the Gildonic revolt.

### 8.2 See also

- List of Roman legions
- Legio VI Herculia
- Legio V Iovia

### 8.3 References

- [1] Gibbon, Edward. *The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire Vol 1 Chapter XIII New Bodies of Guards, Jovians and Herculians*
- [2] *Notitia Dignitatum, Pars Occidentalis*, V
- [3] *Notitia Dignitatum, Pars Orientalis*, V

# Chapter 9

## Scholae Palatinae



Emperor Justinian I and his court, from the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna. The soldiers left, with the golden neck-torques typical of Byzantine guardsmen, are scholares.

The *Scholae Palatinae* (literally “Palatine Schools”, in Greek: Σχολαί, *Scholai*) were an elite military guard unit, usually ascribed to the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great as a replacement for the *equites singulares Augusti*, the cavalry arm of the Praetorian Guard. The *Scholae* survived in Roman and later Byzantine service until they disappeared in the late 11th century, during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos.



The insignia of the Eastern scholae, from the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

### 9.1 Late Roman era, 4th–7th centuries: imperial guards

#### 9.1.1 History and structure

See also: Late Roman army and East Roman army

During the civil wars of the late Tetrarchy, Caesar Flavius Valerius Severus, following the orders of Galerius (reigned 305–311), attempted to disband the Praetorian Guard but only managed to lead the rest of them in revolting and

joining Maxentius. When Constantine the Great (r. 306–337), launching an invasion of Italy in 312, forced a final confrontation at the Milvian Bridge, the Praetorian cohorts made up the most prominent element of Maxentius' army. Later, in Rome, the victorious Constantine definitively disbanded the Praetorian Guard. Although there is no direct evidence that Constantine established the *Scholae Palatinae* at the same time, the lack of a bodyguard unit would have become immediately apparent, and he is commonly regarded as their founder. Nevertheless, some units, such as the *schola gentilium* (“school of tribesmen”) are at-



The insignia of the Western scholae, from the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

tested much earlier than 312, and may have their origins in the reign of Diocletian (r. 284–305).



Palatine insignia on the shields of the soldiers in the Arrest of Christ on the Brescia Casket, late 4th century.

The term "schola" was commonly used in the early 4th century to refer to organized corps of the imperial retinue, both civil and military, and derives from the fact that they occupied specific rooms or chambers in the palace.

Each *schola* was formed into an elite cavalry regiment of around 500 troops.\* [1] Many scholarians (Latin: *scholares*, Greek: σχολάριοι, *scholarioi*) were recruited from among Germanic tribes.\* [2] In the West, these were Franks and Alamanni,\* [3] while in the East, Goths were employed. In the East, under the impact of anti-Gothic policies, from the mid-5th century they were largely replaced with Armenians and Isaurians. However, evidence of the scholarians mentioned in primary sources indicates that the presence of native Romans in the *scholae* was not negligible. Of the recorded and named scholarians in the fourth century, ten are definitely Roman, forty one probably Roman; whilst only five are definitely barbarian and eleven probably barbarian.\* [4]

Each *schola* was commanded by a *tribunus* who ranked as a *comes* of the first class, and who were discharged with a rank equal to that of a provincial *dux*.\* [5] The *tribunus* had a number of senior officers called *domestici* or *protectores* directly under him.\* [6] Unlike the Praetorians, there was no overall military commander of the *scholae*, and the Emperor retained direct control over them; however, for administrative purposes, the *scholae* were eventually placed under the direction of the *magister officiorum*.\* [7] In the *Notitia Dignitatum* of the late 4th century, seven *scholae* are listed for the Eastern Empire and five for the Western.\* [8] In Justinian I's time (r. 527–565), but also possibly in earlier times, the *scholae* were billeted in the wider neighbourhood of Constantinople, in the towns of Bithynia and Thrace, serving in the palace by rotation.\* [2]

As befitted their guards status, the scholarians received higher pay and enjoyed more privileges than the regular army: they received extra rations (*annonae civicae*), were exempt from the recruitment tax (*privilegiis scholarum*) and were often used by the Emperors on civilian missions inside the Empire.\* [6] Gradually however, the ease of palace life and lack of actual campaigning, as the Emperors ceased to take the field themselves, lessened their combat abilities. In the East, they were eventually replaced as the main imperial bodyguard by the Excubitors, founded by Emperor Leo I the Thracian (r. 457–474), while in the West, they were permanently disbanded by the Ostrogoth ruler Theodoric the Great (ruler of Italy in 493–526).\* [9] Under Emperor Zeno (r. 474–491), they degenerated to parade-ground display troops: as it became possible to buy an appointment into the ranks of the *scholae*, and the social status and benefits this entailed, the units were increasingly filled with by the capital's well-connected young nobility. Emperor Justinian is said to have caused panic amongst their members by proposing that they be sent on an expedition. Justinian also raised four "supernumerary" *scholae* of 2,000 men purely in order to raise money from the sale of the appointments. It seems that this increase was reverted by the same emperor later.\* [6]

Forty *scholares*, named *candidati* for their bright white tunics, were selected to form the Emperor's personal bodyguard,<sup>\*[10]</sup> and although by the 6th century they too fulfilled a purely ceremonial role, in the 4th century they accompanied the emperors on campaign, as for example Julian (r. 361–363) in Persia.<sup>\*[11]</sup>

### 9.1.2 List of *scholae* from the *Notitia Dignitatum*

**In the Western Empire (the Western part of the *Notitia* refers to the 420s)**

- *Scola scutariorum prima*
- *Scola scutariorum secunda*
- *Scola armaturarum seniorum*
- *Scola gentilium seniorum*
- *Scola scutatorum tertia*

**In the Eastern Empire (the Eastern part of the *Notitia* refers to the 390s)**

- *Scola scutariorum prima*
- *Scola scutariorum secunda*
- *Scola gentilium seniorum*<sup>\*[12]</sup>
- *Scola scutariorum sagittariorum*, a unit of horse archers.
- *Scola scutariorum clibanariorum*, a unit of *clibanarii*.
- *Scola armaturarum iuniorum*
- *Scola gentilium iuniorum*

Note: The suffixes "*seniorum*" and "*iuniorum*" refer to units of the same ancestry, now commonly held to have been created from the division of the Roman army in 364 between emperors Valens and Valentinian I. The *seniores* are the "senior" Western units, while *iuniores* their "junior" Eastern counterparts.

### 9.1.3 Notable scholars

- Saints Sergius and Bacchus were officers in Emperor Maximian's *schola gentilium*.<sup>\*[13]</sup>
- Saint Martin of Tours, an officer in the *scholae* of Caesar Julian.

- Mallobaudes, a Frankish king, *tribunus armaturarum*, later *magister militum*.
- Claudio Silvanus, a Frankish tribune and later usurper.
- Bacurius, prince of Caucasian Iberia, *tribunus sagittariorum* at the Battle of Adrianople.<sup>\*[14]</sup>
- Cassio, *tribunus scutariorum* (likely of the elite first *schola*) at the Battle of Adrianople.<sup>\*[14]</sup>
- Justinian I served as a *candidatus* in 518, at the time of the death of Emperor Anastasius and the accession of his uncle Justin I.

## 9.2 Middle Byzantine period, 8th–11th centuries: the *scholae* as one of the *tagmata*

For more details on this topic, see *Tagma* (military).

The *scholae*, along with the *excubitores*, continued to exist in the 7th and early 8th centuries, although diminished in size, as purely ceremonial units. However, in ca. 743, after putting down a major rebellion of thematic troops, Emperor Constantine V (r. 741–775) reformed the old guard units of Constantinople into the new *tagmata* regiments, which were meant to provide the emperor with a core of professional and loyal troops.<sup>\*[15]</sup> The *tagmata* were professional heavy cavalry units, garrisoned in and around Constantinople, forming the central reserve of the Byzantine military system and the core of the imperial expeditionary forces. In addition, like their Late Roman ancestors, they were an important stage in a military career for young aristocrats, which could lead to major field commands or state offices.<sup>\*[16]</sup>

The exact size of the *tagmata* is a subject of debate. Estimates range from 1,000<sup>\*[17]</sup> to 4,000<sup>\*[18]</sup> men. The various *tagmata* had a uniform structure, differing only in the nomenclature used for certain titles, which reflected their different ancestries. The *scholai* were headed by the *domestikos tōn scholōn* (δομέστικος τῶν σχολῶν, "Domestic of the Schools"), first attested in 767.<sup>\*[19]</sup> As the old office of the *magister officiorum* was transformed into the more or less ceremonial post of *magistros*, the *domestikos* was established as the independent commander of the *scholai*. In contemporary histories, he holds the rank of *patrikios*, and is considered as one of the senior-most generals, surpassed only by the *strategos* of the Anatolic Theme.<sup>\*[20]</sup> By the 10th century, he had risen to be the senior officer of the entire army, effectively a commander-in-chief under the Emperor. In ca. 959, the post and the unit itself were divided

into two separate commands, one for the East (*domestikos [tōn scholōn tēs] anatolēs*) and one for the West (*domestikos [tōn scholōn tēs] dyseōs*).\*[21]

The *domestikos tōn scholōn* was assisted by two officers called *topotērētēs* (τοποτηρητής, lit. “placeholder”, “lieutenant”), who each commanded half of the unit, a *chartoularios* (χαρτουλάριος, “secretary”) and the *proexēmos* or *proximos* (head messenger).\*[22] The *tagma* was further divided into smaller units (*banda*, sing. *bandon*) commanded by a *komēs* (κόμης [τῶν σχολῶν], “Count [of the Schools]”). In the late 10th century, there were 30 such *banda*, of unknown size.\*[23] Each *komēs* commanded 5 junior *domestikoi*, the equivalent of regular army *kentarchoi* (“centurions”).\*[24] There were also 40 standard-bearers (*bandophoroi*), who were grouped in four different categories. In the *scholai*, these were: *protiktores* (προτίκτορες, “protectors”, deriving from the older *protectores*), *eutyphoroi* (εὐτυχοφόροι, “carriers of *eutychia*”; here *eutychia* is a corruption of *ptychia*, images of Fortune and Victory), *sképtrophoroi* (“bearers of sceptres”, i.e. staves with images on top) and *axiōmatikoi* (“officers”).\*[25]\*[26]

The *kandidatoi* are still mentioned in the 10th-century work *De Ceremoniis*, but the title had become nothing more than a palace dignity, fulfilling a purely ceremonial role and entirely separate from the *tagma* of the *scholai*.

### 9.3 References

- [1] Number attested in the time of Justinian; 4th-century numbers may have been different. *Codex Iustinianus* IV.65 & XXXV.1
- [2] Haldon (1999), p. 68
- [3] In the 4th century, Franks were very numerous among palace guards; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Historiae* XV.5.11
- [4] Elton, pp. 151-152
- [5] *Codex Theodosianus*, VI.13
- [6] Treadgold (1995), p. 92
- [7] Southern & Dixon (1996), p. 57
- [8] *Notitia Dignitatum*, *Pars Orient.* XI.4-10 & *Pars Occid.* IX.4-8
- [9] Southern & Dixon (1996), p. 56
- [10] Jones (1986), pp. 613-614 & 1253
- [11] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Historiae* XXV.3.6
- [12] most likely the same unit mentioned for the West, transferred there after the Eastern list was compiled
- [13] The Origin of the Cult of SS. Sergius and Bacchus

- [14] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Historiae* XXXI.12.16
- [15] Haldon (1999), p. 78
- [16] Haldon (1999), pp. 270-273
- [17] Haldon (1999), p. 103
- [18] Treadgold (1980), pp. 273-277
- [19] Treadgold (1995), p. 28
- [20] Bury (1911), pp. 50-51
- [21] Treadgold (1995), p. 78
- [22] Treadgold (1995), p. 102
- [23] Bury (1911), p. 53
- [24] Treadgold (1980), p. 274
- [25] Bury (1911), pp. 55-57
- [26] Treadgold (1980), p. 276

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# Chapter 10

## Excubitors

The **Excubitors** (Latin: *excubitores* or *excubiti*, literally “those out of bed”, i.e. “sentinels”; Greek: ἔξκουβίτορες or ἔξκουβιτοι) were founded in circa 460 AD as the imperial guards of the early Byzantine emperors. Their commanders soon acquired great influence and provided a series of emperors in the 6th century. The Excubitors fade from the record in the late 7th century, but in the mid-8th century, they were reformed into one of the elite tagmatic units, the professional core of the middle Byzantine army. The Excubitors are last attested in 1081 AD.



Tremissis of Emperor Justin I, the first commander of the Excubitors to rise to the throne.

### 10.1 History

The Excubitors were founded by Emperor Leo I (reigned 457–474) circa 460 and numbered 300 men, often recruited from among the sturdy and warlike Isaurians, as part of Leo's effort to counterbalance the influence of the *magister militum* Aspar and the large Germanic element in the East Roman army.<sup>\*[1]\*[2]\*[3]</sup> Unlike the older palace regiments of the *Scholae Palatinae*, which were under the control of the *magister officiorum* and eventually degenerated to parade-ground formations, the Excubitors long remained a crack fighting force.<sup>\*[4]\*[5]\*[6]</sup> In addition, while the *Scholae* were garrisoned throughout Thrace and Bithynia, the Excubitors were billeted in the imperial palace itself and formed practically the only garrison of Constantinople in the 6th century. Their high status is further illustrated by the fact that both officers and ordinary Excubitors were often sent for special missions by the emperors, including diplomatic assignments.<sup>\*[7]</sup>

The unit was headed by the **Count of the Excubitors** (Latin: *comes excubitorum*; Greek: κόμης τῶν ἔξκουβίτων/ἔξκουβιτόρων, *komēs tōn exkoubitōn/exkoubitorōn*), who, by virtue of his proximity to the emperor, became an official of great importance in the 6th and 7th centuries.<sup>\*[8]</sup> This post, which can be traced up to circa 680, was usually held by close members of the imperial family, often virtual heirs apparent.<sup>\*[5]\*[9]</sup> Thus it was the support of his men that secured Justin I (r. 518–527), who held the

post at the time of the death of Anastasius I, his elevation to the throne.<sup>\*[10]\*[9]</sup> Similarly, Justin II (r. 565–578) relied on the support of the Excubitors for his unchallenged accession; their count, Tiberius, was a close friend who had been appointed to the post through Justin's intervention. Tiberius was to be the Emperor's right-hand man throughout his reign, eventually succeeding him as Tiberius II (r. 578–582).<sup>\*[11]\*[12]</sup> He too would be succeeded by his own *comes excubitorum*, Maurice (r. 582–602).<sup>\*[13]</sup> Under Maurice, the post was held by his brother-in-law Philippicus, and under Phocas (r. 602–610) by Priscus.<sup>\*[9]</sup> Another powerful occupant was Valentinus, who secured it during the power struggles that accompanied the regency of Empress-dowager Martina in 641, before deposing her and her son Heraklonas and installing Constans II (r. 641–668) as emperor. Valentinus dominated the new regime, but his attempt to become emperor in 644 ended in his being lunched by the mob.<sup>\*[14]</sup> The power that went with the position, and the intrigues of men like Priscus and the would-be usurper Valentinus, doomed the post to emasculation and eventual eclipse during the latter half of the 7th century.<sup>\*[15]</sup>

After a lapse towards the end of the 7th century and the first half of the 8th century, the Excubitors reappear in historical sources, under a new commander, the **Domestic of the Excubitors** (δομέστικος τῶν ἔξκουβίτων/ἔξκουβιτόρων, *domestikos tōn exkoubitōn/exkoubitorōn*) and in a new ca-

pacity, as one of the imperial *tagmata*, the elite professional central army established by Constantine V (r. 741–775).<sup>\*[8]</sup><sup>[16]</sup> As one of the *tagmata*, the Excubitors were no longer a palace guard, but a unit actively engaged in military campaigns. At the same time, they were created as a counterbalance to the thematic armies of the provinces and constituted a powerful tool in implementing the iconoclastic policies pursued by Constantine V.<sup>\*[17]</sup> Nevertheless, the possibly first commander of the *tagma*, Strategios Podopagouros, was among the leaders of a failed plot against Constantine V's life in 766, and was executed after its discovery.<sup>\*[18]</sup> By the 780s, however, following years of imperial favour and military victories under Constantine V and his son Leo IV the Khazar (r. 775–780), the *tagmata* had become firm adherents to the iconoclast cause.<sup>\*[17]</sup> Within less than two months of Leo V's death in 780, Empress-regent Irene of Athens had to foil an attempt spearheaded by the Domestic of the Excubitors to place Constantine V's exiled second son Nikephoros on the throne,<sup>\*[19]</sup> and in 786 Irene was forced to forcibly disarm them and exile some 1,500 tagmatic soldiers due to their resistance to the restoration of the icons.<sup>\*[20]</sup><sup>\*[21]</sup>



Solidus of Emperor Michael II and his son, Theophilos.

The Domestics were originally of strikingly low court rank (mere *spatharioi*), but they gradually rose to importance: while in the *Taktikon Uspensky* of circa 842 the Domestic of the Excubitors came behind all the thematic commanders (*stratēgoi*) in order of precedence, in the *Klētorologion* of 899, the Domestic is shown as superior to the *stratēgoi* of the European themes and even to the Eparch of Constantinople. At the same time, the court dignities they held rose to those of *prōtospatharios* and even *patrikios*.<sup>\*[8]</sup><sup>[22]</sup> The most prominent Domestic of the Excubitors of the period was Michael II the Amorian (r. 820–829), whose supporters overthrew Emperor Leo V the Armenian (r. 813–820) and raised him to the throne.<sup>\*[23]</sup> In the latter half of the 10th century, probably under Romanos II (r. 959–963), the regiment, like the senior-most *tagma*, the *Scholae*, was split in two units, one for the West and one for the East, each headed by a respective Domestic.<sup>\*[8]</sup><sup>[24]</sup>

As with most of the *tagmata*, the regiment of the Excubitors did not survive the great upheavals of the later 11th century, when foreign invasion and constant civil wars de-

stroyed much of the Byzantine army. The last mention of the Excubitors occurs in Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, where they are recorded for the last time as participating at the Battle of Dyrrachium against the Normans in 1081 under the command of Constantine Opos.<sup>\*[25]</sup><sup>\*[26]</sup><sup>\*[27]</sup>

## 10.2 Structure

The internal structure of the original *excubitores* regiment is unknown. It is known that it was a cavalry unit and that it had officers called *scribones*. The historian Warren Treadgold speculates that they fulfilled a role similar to the regular cavalry decurions, commanding troops of 30 men each,<sup>\*[6]</sup> but John B. Bury suggested that the *scribones*, though associated with the *excubitores*, remained a separate corps.<sup>\*[28]</sup>

In its later incarnation as a *tagma*, the regiment (often called collectively τὸ ἔξκούβιτον or τὰ ἔξκούβιτα) was structured along standardized lines followed by the other *tagmata*, with a few variations. The *domestikos* was assisted by a *topotērētēs* (Greek: τοποτηρητής, lit. “placeholder”, “lieutenant”) and a *chartoularios* (Greek: χαρτουλάριος, “secretary”).<sup>\*[22]</sup> The regiment itself was divided into at least eighteen *banda*, probably each commanded by a *skribōn* (Greek: σκρίβων).<sup>\*[29]</sup> Each of them was further divided into sub-units headed by a *drakonarios* (Greek: δρακονάριος, deriving from the late Roman *draconarius*), and included three classes of standard-bearers who functioned as junior officers: the *skeuophoroi* (Greek: σκευοφόροι, “standard carriers”), *signophoroi* (Greek: σιγνοφόροι, i.e. signifiers) and *sinatores* (Greek: σινάτορες, from the late Roman rank of *senator*).<sup>\*[30]</sup><sup>\*[31]</sup> There were also the usual messengers (Greek: μανδάτορες, *mandatores*) under a *prōtomandatōr*, some of whom were also termed *legatarioi* (Greek: λεγατάριοι).<sup>\*[30]</sup>

The size of the *tagma* of the Excubitors and its subdivisions can not be determined with certainty; as with the other *tagmata*, scholars are of differing opinions regarding its numerical strength. Drawing on the lists of officers and accounts of Arab geographers Ibn Khurdādhbah and Qudāmah, historian Warren Treadgold maintains an establishment strength of circa 4,000 men, which for the *Scholae* and the Excubitors rose to circa 6,000 with the division of the regiments in the mid-10th century.<sup>\*[32]</sup> Other scholars, most prominently John Haldon, have revised estimates to some 1,000 men for each *tagma*.<sup>\*[33]</sup> For security reasons, both the *Scholae* and the Excubitors were scattered in garrisons in Thrace and Bithynia, making it harder for them to be used in mounting a coup.<sup>\*[34]</sup>

## 10.3 References

- [1] Treadgold 1995, pp. 13–14.
- [2] Treadgold 1997, p. 152.
- [3] Cameron, Ward-Perkins & Whitby 2000, pp. 47, 291.
- [4] Evans 1996, pp. 11–12, 41.
- [5] Cameron, Ward-Perkins & Whitby 2000, p. 291.
- [6] Treadgold 1995, p. 92.
- [7] Haldon 1984, pp. 136–139.
- [8] Kazhdan 1991, pp. 646–647.
- [9] Bury 1911, p. 57.
- [10] Evans 1996, pp. 11–13.
- [11] Treadgold 1997, p. 218.
- [12] Evans 1996, pp. 264, 267.
- [13] Treadgold 1997, p. 227.
- [14] Treadgold 1997, pp. 309–310.
- [15] Kaegi 1981, p. 174.
- [16] Haldon 1999, p. 78.
- [17] Whittow 1996, p. 168.
- [18] Treadgold 1997, pp. 363–364.
- [19] Treadgold 1997, p. 417.
- [20] Whittow 1996, pp. 168–170.
- [21] Treadgold 1997, pp. 419–420.
- [22] Bury 1911, p. 58.
- [23] Treadgold 1997, p. 433.
- [24] Treadgold 1997, p. 494.
- [25] Birkenmeier 2002, pp. 156–159.
- [26] Haldon 1999, pp. 91–93.
- [27] Treadgold 1995, p. 41.
- [28] Bury 1911, p. 59.
- [29] Bury 1911, pp. 58–59.
- [30] Bury 1911, pp. 59–60.
- [31] Treadgold 1995, pp. 102, 104.
- [32] Treadgold 1995, p. 103.
- [33] Haldon 1999, p. 102.
- [34] Treadgold 1997, p. 359.

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# Chapter 11

## Spatharios

The *spatharii* or *spatharioi* (singular: Latin: *spatharius*; Greek: σπαθάριος, literally "spatha-bearer") were a class of Late Roman imperial bodyguards in the court in Constantinople in the 5th–6th centuries, later becoming a purely honorary dignity in the Byzantine Empire.

### 11.1 History

Originally, the term was probably applied to both private and imperial bodyguards.<sup>\*[1]</sup> The original imperial *spatharioi* were probably or later became also the eunuch *cubicularii* (Greek: *koubikoularoi*), members of the *sacrum cubiculum* (the imperial “sacred chamber”) charged with military duties. They are attested from the reign of Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–450), where the eunuch Chrysaphius held the post.<sup>\*[2]</sup> The existence of the specific title of *spatharokoubikoularios* for eunuchs in 532 probably suggests the existence by then of other, non-eunuch, *spatharioi* in imperial service. The various generals and provincial governors also maintained military attendants called *spatharioi*, whilst those of the emperor were distinguished with the prefix *basilikoi* (“imperial ones”).<sup>\*[3]</sup> The officer leading the imperial *spatharioi* held the title *prōtospatharios* (“first *spatharios*”), which became a separate dignity probably in the late 7th century.<sup>\*[4]</sup>

By the early 8th century, these titles had lost their original military connotations and become honorific titles. The title of *spatharios* ranked initially quite high, being awarded for instance by Emperor Justinian II (r. 685–695) to his friend and future emperor Leo III the Isaurian (r. 717–741).<sup>\*[5]</sup> It gradually declined, however, and in the *Klētorologion* of 899, it occupies the seventh-highest place in the hierarchy of ranks for non-eunuchs, above the *hypatos* and below the *spatharokandidatos*.<sup>\*[6]</sup> According to the *Klētorologion*, the insignia of the dignity was a gold-hilted sword.<sup>\*[7]</sup> At the same time, the term *oikeiakos spatharios* still designated a bodyguard of the imperial *oikos* (“household”), as distinct from the *basilikoi spatharioi* who now were the holders of the honorary dignity.<sup>\*[5]</sup> The term ceased to

be used in these contexts after circa 1075, and by the time Anna Komnene wrote her *Alexiad* in the early 12th century, a *spatharios* was held to be completely insignificant.<sup>\*[5]</sup>

### 11.2 Other occurrences

- In the *Lex Alemannorum* (79.7), a *spatharius* is a swordsmith.
- Ælfric of Eynsham glosses *spatharius* as “sword-bearer”: “swyrd-bora. Id est, Ensifer.”
- In the 12th century, the *Milites Ordinis S. Jacobi de la Spatha*, a Portuguese chivalric order, were known as *Spatharii*.
- In medieval Moldova, the *Spătar* was the keeper of the royal sword and bludgeon, commander of the cavalry and second-in-command of the army after the voivode.<sup>\*[8]</sup>

### 11.3 References

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[6] Bury 1911, pp. 22, 26.  
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# Chapter 12

## Tagma (military)

This article is about the military unit. For the biological term, see *tagma* (biology).

The *tagma* (Greek: τάγμα, pl. τάγματα) is a term for a military unit of battalion or regiment size. The best-known and most technical use of the term however refers to the elite regiments formed by Byzantine emperor Constantine V and comprising the central army of the Byzantine Empire in the 8th–11th centuries.

### 12.1 History and role

In its original sense, the term “tagma” (from the Greek τάσσειν, “to set in order”) is attested from the 4th century and was used to refer to an infantry battalion of 200–400 men (also termed *bandum* or *numerus* in Latin, *arithmos* in Greek) in the contemporary East Roman army.<sup>\*[1]</sup> In this sense, the term continues in use in the modern Greek military (cf. Greek military ranks).

#### 12.1.1 Imperial guards, 8th–10th centuries

In later Byzantine usage, the term came to refer exclusively to the professional, standing troops, garrisoned in and around the capital of Constantinople.<sup>\*[2]</sup> Most of them traced their origins to the Imperial guard units of the later Roman Empire. By the 7th century, these had declined to little more than parade troops, meaning that the emperors were hard put to face the frequent revolts of the new and powerful thematic formations, especially the Opsician Theme, the Asian theme closest to the capital. Within the first sixty years since its creation, it was involved in five revolts, culminating in the rebellion and usurpation of the throne by its commander, the Count Artabasdos, in 741–743.<sup>\*[3]</sup>

After putting down the revolt, Emperor Constantine V (r. 741–775) reformed the old guard units of Constantinople into the new *tagmata* regiments, which were meant

to provide the emperor with a core of professional and loyal troops,<sup>\*[4]</sup> both as a defense against provincial revolts, and also, at the time, as a formation devoted to Constantine's iconoclastic policies.<sup>\*[5]</sup> The *tagmata* were exclusively heavy cavalry units,<sup>\*[6]</sup> more mobile than the theme troops, and maintained on a permanent basis. During the defensive phase of the Empire in the 8th and 9th centuries, their role was that of a central reserve, garrisoned in and around the capital, in regions such as Thrace and Bithynia.<sup>\*[6]</sup> They formed the core of the imperial army on campaign, augmented by the provincial levies of thematic troops, who were more concerned with local defense.

In addition, like their Late Roman counterparts, they served as a recruiting and promotion ground for young officers. A career in a *tagma* could lead to a major commands in the provincial thematic armies or a high court appointment, as promising young men had the opportunity to catch the Emperor's attention.<sup>\*[7]</sup> Officers in the *tagmata* came primarily either from the relatively well-off urban aristocracy and officialdom, or the landed aristocracy of the Anatolian themes, which increasingly came to control the higher military offices of the state.<sup>\*[8]</sup> Nevertheless, the *tagmata*, as indeed military and state service in general, offered a degree of upwards social mobility for the lower strata of society.<sup>\*[9]</sup>

In their heyday in the 9th and early 10th centuries, there were four *tagmata* proper ("τὰ δ' τάγματα").<sup>\*[10]</sup>

- the *Scholai* (Gr. Σχολαί, “the Schools”), were the most senior unit, the direct successor of the imperial guards established by Constantine the Great (r. 306–337). The term *scholarioi* (σχολάριοι), although in its stricter sense referring solely to the men of the *Scholai*, was also used as a general reference for all common soldiers of the *tagmata*.<sup>\*[6]</sup>
- the *Exkoubitoi* or *Exkoubitores* (Lat. *Excubiti*, Gr. Ἐξκούβιτοι, “the Sentinels”), established by Leo I.

- the *Arithmos* (Gr. Ἀριθμός, “Number”) or *Vigla* (Gr. Βίγλα, from the Latin word for “Watch”), promoted from thematic troops by the Empress Eirene in the 780s, but of far older ancestry, as the archaic names of its ranks indicate.\*[11] The regiment performed special duties on campaign, including guarding the imperial camp, relaying the Emperor's orders, and guarding prisoners of war.\*[12]
- the *Hikanatoi* (Gr. Ἰκανάτοι, “the Able Ones”), established by Emperor Nikephoros I (r. 802–811) in 810.\*[6]

Other units closely related to the *tagmata*, and often included among them, were:

- the *Noumeroi* (Gr. Νούμεροι, from the Latin *numerus*, “number”) were a garrison unit for Constantinople, which probably included the *Teichistai* (Gr. Τειχισταί) or *tōn Teicheōn* regiment (Gr. τῶν Τειχέων, “of the Walls”), manning the Walls of Constantinople.\*[6] The unit's origins may lie as far back as the 4th–5th centuries.\*[13]
- the *Optimatoi* (Gr. Ὀπτιμάτοι, from Latin *optimates*, “the best”), although formerly an elite fighting unit, had by the 8th century been reduced to a support unit, responsible for the mules of the army's baggage train (the *τοῦλδον, touldon*).\*[14] Unlike the *tagmata*, it was garrisoned outside Constantinople and closely associated with its garrison area: the *thema Optimatōn*, which lay across Constantinople and comprised northern Bithynia. The commanding *domestikos* of the *Optimatoi* was also the governor of the *thema*.\*[15]
- the men of the central **Imperial Fleet** (βασιλικόν πλώμον, *basilikon plōimon*), are also counted among the *tagmata* in some sources.\*[6]

In addition, there was also the *Hetaireia* (Gr. Ἐταιρεία, “Companions”), which comprised the mercenary corps in Imperial service, subdivided in Greater, Middle and Lesser, each commanded by a respective *Hetaireiarchēs*.

## Organization

There is much debate as to the exact size and composition of the imperial *tagmata*, owing to the inaccuracy and am-

biguity of the few contemporary sources (military manuals, lists of offices and Arab accounts, primarily from the 9th century) that deal with them.\* a[.] Our primary sources, the accounts of Arab geographers Ibn Khurdādbah and Qudāmah are somewhat ambiguous, but they give the overall *tagmata* strength at 24,000. This figure has been seen by many scholars, such as John Bagnell Bury\*[16] and John Haldon, as too high, and revised estimates put the strength of each *tagma* at 1,000–1,500 men.\*[17] Others, like Warren Treadgold and (in part) Friedhelm Winkelmann, accept these numbers, and correlate them with the lists of officers in the *Klētorologion* to reach an average size of 4,000 for each *tagma* (including the *Optimatoi* and the *Noumeroi*, for which it is explicitly stated that they numbered 4,000 each).\*[18]

The tagmatic units were all organized along similar lines. They were commanded by a *domestikos*, except for the *Vigla*, which was commanded by a *droungarios*. He was assisted by one or two officers called *topotērētēs* (Gr. τοποτηρητής, lit. “placeholder”, “lieutenant”), each of whom commanded one half of the unit.\*[19] Unlike the thematic units, there were no permanent intermediate command levels (*tourmarchai, chiliarchoi* or *pentakosiarchai*) until Leo VI introduced the *droungarios* ca. after 902.\*[20] The largest subdivision of the *tagmata* was the *bandon*, commanded by a *komēs* (“count”), called *skribōn* in the *Exkoubitores* and *tribounos* (“tribune”) in the *Noumeroi* and Walls units. The *banda* in turn were divided in companies, headed by a *kentarchos* (“centurion”), or *drakonarios* (“draconarius”) for the *Exkoubitores*, and *vikarios* (“vicar”) for the *Noumeroi* and Walls units. The *domestikos tōn Scholōn*, the head of the *Scholai* regiment, became gradually more and more important, eventually coming to be the most senior officer of the entire army by the end of the 10th century.\*[21]

The following table illustrates the structure of the *Scholai* in the 9th century, according to Treadgold:\*

In addition, there were a *chartoularios* (χαρτουλάριος, “secretary”) and a *prōtomandatōr* (πρωτομανδάτωρ, “head messenger”), as well as 40 standard bearers (βανδοφόροι, *bandophoroi*), of varying ranks and titles in each *tagma*, and 40 *mandatores* (“messengers”), for a total unit size of 4,125.\*[22] On campaign, every tagmatic cavalryman was accompanied by a servant.

The next table gives the evolution of the theoretical establishment size of the entire imperial tagmatic force, again as calculated by Warren Treadgold:

### 12.1.2 Professional regiments, 10th–11th centuries

As the Byzantine Empire embarked on its campaigns of reconquest in the 10th century, the *tagmata* became more active, and were posted often in garrison duties in the provinces or in newly conquered territories.\*[27] In addition to the older units, a number of new and specialized units were formed to meet the demands of this more aggressive style of warfare.\*[28] Michael II (r. 820–829) raised the short-lived *Tessarakontarioi*, a special marine unit (named after their high pay of 40 *nomismata*),\*[29] and John I Tzimiskes (r. 969–976) created a heavy cataphract corps called the *Athanatoi* (Αθάνατοι, the "Immortals") after the old Persian unit, which were revived in the late 11th century by Michael VII Doukas (r. 1071–1078). Other similar units were the *Stratēlatai*, likewise formed by John Tzimiskes, the short-lived *Satrapai* of the 970s, the *Megathymoi* of the 1040s or the *Archontopoulai* and *Vestiaritai* of Alexios I.\*[28] Many of the new *tagmata* were composed of foreigners, such as the *Maniakalatai*, formed by George Maniakes from Franks in Italy,\*[28] or the most famous of all tagmatic units, the 6,000-strong mercenary Varangian Guard (Τάγμα τῶν Βαραγγίων), established ca. 988 by Emperor Basil II (r. 976–1025).

The reign of Basil II also saw the beginnings of a profound transformation of the Byzantine military system. In the mid-10th century, the decline in the numbers of the thematic forces and the exigencies of the new offensive strategy on the eastern border gave rise to an increasing number of provincial *tagmata*, permanent professional forces modelled after the imperial *tagmata*.\*[30] The great conquests in the East in the 960s were secured by the creation of an array of smaller *themata*, in which detachments of these professional forces were based, eventually to be grouped under regional commanders with the title of *doux* or *katepanō*.\*[31] This strategy was effective against small-scale local threats, but the concurrent neglect of the thematic forces reduced the state's ability to respond effectively to a major invasion that succeeded in penetrating the frontier buffer zone.\*[32] The decline of the part-time thematic armies and the increasing reliance on a large array of permanent units, both indigenous and mercenary, was based not only on the greater military effectiveness of the latter in the more offensive Byzantine strategy of the era, but also on their greater reliability as opposed to the thematic troops with their local ties.\*[33] The *tagmata* recruited from the larger *themata* were probably 1,000 men strong, while those from the smaller *themata* may have numbered ca. 500 men. Foreign, chiefly Frankish mercenary units, also seem to have numbered 400–500 men.\*[34]

Consequently, in the 11th century, the distinction between "imperial" and provincial forces largely vanished, and the

term *tagma* was applied to any permanent formed regiment, and regional origins and identities are prominently displayed in the units' titles. After ca. 1050, like the thematic armies, the original *tagmata* slowly declined, and were decimated in the military disasters of the latter third of the 11th century. Except for the Varangians, the *Vestiaritai*, the *Hetaireia* and the *Vardariōtai*, the older guard units disappear altogether by ca. 1100 and are absent from the 12th-century Komnenian army.\*[35]\*[36] In the Komnenian army, the term *tagma* reverted to a non-specific meaning of "military unit".

## 12.2 Notes

<sup>^ a</sup>: The main contemporary sources for the period from the 8th to the late 10th centuries are: i) the various lists of offices (*Taktika*), including the *Taktikon Uspensky* (ca. 842), the *Kleitorologion* of Philotheos (899), and the *Escorial Taktikon* (ca. 975); ii) the various Byzantine military manuals, chiefly the *Tactica* of Leo VI the Wise; iii) the works of Arab geographers Ibn al-Faqih, Ibn Khurdādhbah and Qudāmah ibn Ja'far, who preserve the earlier work of al-Jarmī that dates to ca. 840; and iv) the *De Administrando Imperio* and *De Ceremoniis* of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos.

## 12.3 References

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- [2] Bury (1911), p. 47
- [3] Treadgold (1995), p. 28
- [4] Haldon (1999), p. 78
- [5] Haldon (1984), pp. 228–235
- [6] Bury (1911), p. 48
- [7] Haldon (1999), pp. 270–271
- [8] Haldon (1999), pp. 272–273
- [9] Haldon (1999), p. 272
- [10] Bury (1911), pp. 47–48
- [11] Haldon (1999), p. 111
- [12] Bury (1911), p. 60
- [13] Bury (1911), p. 65
- [14] Haldon (1999), p. 158

- [15] Bury (1911), p. 66
- [16] Bury (1911), p. 54
- [17] Haldon (1999), p. 103
- [18] Treadgold (1980), pp. 273–277
- [19] Treadgold (1995), p. 102
- [20] Treadgold (1995), p. 105
- [21] Treadgold (1995), p. 78
- [22] Treadgold (1995), p. 103
- [23] Treadgold (1997), p. 358
- [24] Treadgold (1997), p. 427
- [25] Treadgold (1997), p. 576
- [26] Treadgold (1997), p. 548
- [27] Haldon (1999), p. 84
- [28] Haldon (1999), p. 118
- [29] Haldon (1999), p. 125
- [30] Haldon (1999), pp. 115–118
- [31] Haldon (1999), pp. 84–85
- [32] Haldon (1999), pp. 85–91
- [33] Haldon (1999), pp. 92–93
- [34] Haldon (1999), pp. 103–104, 116
- [35] Haldon (1999), pp. 119–120
- [36] Treadgold (1995), p. 117
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# Chapter 13

## Hetaireia

For similarly spelled words, see [Hetair-](#).

The **Hetaireia** or **Hetaeria** (Ancient Greek: ἑταίρεια) was a term for a corps of bodyguards during the Byzantine Empire. It means “the Company”, echoing the ancient Macedonian Companions.

The most important such corps was the imperial *Hetaireia* (βασιλική ἑταίρεια, *basilikē hetaireia*), composed chiefly of foreigners, which formed part of the Byzantine imperial guard alongside the *tagmata* in the 9th–12th centuries.<sup>\*[1]</sup> The term *hetaireia* was also applied to the smaller bodyguards of thematic military commanders (*stratēgoi*), headed by a count (κόμης τῆς ἑταίρειας, *komēs tēs hetaireias*),<sup>\*[2]</sup> and from the 13th century on, it was employed in a generic sense for the armed retinues of magnates, bound by oath to their master.<sup>\*[1]</sup>

### 13.1 History and role of the imperial Hetaireia

The exact origin, role, and structure of the imperial *Hetaireia* are unclear. The term first appears in the early 9th century: narrative sources record its existence in 813 as a bodyguard for the Byzantine emperor on campaign.<sup>\*[3]</sup> John B. Bury theorized that it was the evolution of the earlier *Foederati*,<sup>\*[4]</sup> but this supposition was rejected by John Haldon.<sup>\*[5]</sup>

The *Hetaireia* of the middle Byzantine period was divided in several units: three or four according to the sources, distinguished by their epithets and each, at least originally, under its respective **Hetaeriarch** (ἑταιρειάρχης, *hetaireiarchēs*).<sup>\*[1]</sup>

The senior unit was the “Great *Hetaireia*” (μεγάλη ἑταίρεια, *megalē hetaireia*), under the Great Hetaeriarch (*megas hetaireiarchēs*), who ranked as the senior of the military officials known as *stratarchai* and was often referred to simply as “the Hetaeriarch” (οἱ ἑταιρειάρχης) *par excellence*.

*lence*.<sup>\*[6]</sup> It was a very important position in the late 9th and first half of the 10th centuries, as he was in charge of the Byzantine emperor's security, and was entrusted with delicate assignments. It is telling that the future emperor Romanos Lekapenos held this post, and was succeeded by his son Christopher Lekapenos.<sup>\*[1]</sup> According to the mid-10th century *De Ceremoniis*, written by Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (r. 913–959), the Great Hetaeriarch and his unit are charged with the protection of the emperor's tent on campaign, and with the security of the imperial palace, in close association with the *papias* of the palace.<sup>\*[7]</sup>

A “Middle *Hetaireia*” (μέση ἑταίρεια, *mesē hetaireia*) is attested in sources, and the possible existence of a “Lesser *Hetaireia*” (μικρὰ ἑταίρεια, *mikra hetaireia*) is implied by the reference to Stylianos Zaoutzes as *mikros hetaireiarchēs* under Emperor Michael III (r. 842–867).<sup>\*[8]</sup> Alternatively, the unit of the *mikros hetaireiarchēs* may be identical to the barbarian regiment composed of the two companies of the *Chazaroi* (Χαζάροι, “Khazars”) and the *Pharganoi* (Φαργάνοι), which is called the “Third *Hetaireia*” (τρίτη ἑταίρεια, *tritē hetaireia*) in the *Escorial Taktikon* of circa 975.<sup>\*[9]\*[10]</sup> The historian Warren Treadgold estimates the total strength of the imperial *Hetaireia* in the early 10th century at 1,200 men.<sup>\*[9]</sup>

The bulk of the *Hetaireia* was apparently composed of foreigners (*ethnikoi*), and contemporary accounts list Khazars, *Pharganoi*, *Tourkoi* (i.e. Magyars), Franks and Arabs.<sup>\*[11]</sup> The meaning of the term *Pharganoi* has been the subject of debate. It could denote their origin from the area of Central Asia around the Fergana Valley, or it could be a misspelling of *Pharangoi*, i.e. Varangians.<sup>\*[1]</sup> Honorary posts in the *Hetaireia*, however, were prestigious appointments that could be purchased by native Byzantine officials, connected to an annual stipend (*roga*) paid by the imperial treasury to the holder. A post in the “Great *Hetaireia*” cost a minimum of 16 *litrai* of gold, a post in the “Middle *Hetaireia*” a minimum of ten, and in each of the *Chazaroi* or *Pharganoi* companies a minimum of seven.<sup>\*[7]\*[12]</sup>

As the 10th century progressed, a tendency of amalgama-

tion of the various units into a single command becomes evident, as the “Middle *Hetaireia*” seems to have been placed under the Great Hetaerarch.<sup>\*[8]</sup> [8] The importance of the *Hetaireia* as a bodyguard corps declined thereafter, but the unit was one of the few regiments of the middle Byzantine army to survive into the Komnenian-era army, being attested well into the reign of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (r. 1143–1180).<sup>\*[13]</sup> [13] By this time, however, its composition had changed: in the late 11th century, Nikephoros Bryennios the Younger reports that the *Hetaireia* was “customarily” made up of young Byzantine nobles.<sup>\*[1]</sup> [1]

The post of *[megas] hetaireiarchēs* also survived, and, detached from its military duties, remained an important court position: it was held by several influential palace eunuchs in the 11th century, and by second-rank nobles and junior relatives of the Byzantine imperial family, such as George Palaiologos, in the Komnenian period. In the Palaiologan period, it was held by members of prominent noble families.<sup>\*[1]</sup> [1]

## 13.2 See also

- Somatophylakes
- All pages beginning with “Hetair-”

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- [9] Treadgold 1995, p. 110.
- [10] Bury 1911, pp. 107–108; Oikonomides 2001, pp. 12, 27.
- [11] Oikonomides 2001, pp. 20–21.
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# Chapter 14

## Varangian Guard



Varangian Guardsmen, an illumination from the *Skylitzis Chronicle*

The **Varangian Guard** (Greek: Τάγμα τῶν Βαράγγων, *Tágma tōn Varángōn*) was an elite unit of the Byzantine Army, from the 10th to the 14th centuries, whose members served as personal bodyguards of the Byzantine Emperors. They are known for being primarily composed of Germanic peoples, specifically, Scandinavians (the Guard was formed approximately 200 years into the Viking age) and Anglo-Saxons from England (particularly after the Norman Invasion).

The Rus' provided the earliest members of the Varangian guard. Rus' were in Byzantine service from as early as 874. The guard was first formally constituted under Emperor Basil II in 988, following the Christianization of Kievan Rus' by Vladimir I of Kiev. Vladimir, who had recently usurped power in Kiev with an army of Varangian warriors, sent 6,000 men to Basil as part of a military assistance agreement.\*[1]\*[2]\*[3] Basil's distrust of the native Byzantine guardsmen, whose loyalties often shifted with fatal consequences, as well as the proven loyalty of the Varangians, many of whom had previously served in Byzantium, led the emperor to employ them as his personal guardsmen. Over the years, new recruits from Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland kept a predominantly Norse cast to the organization until the late 11th century.

So many Scandinavians left to enlist in the guard that a me-

dieval Swedish law from Västergötland stated that no one could inherit while staying in Greece—the then Scandinavian term for the Byzantine Empire.\*[4] In the eleventh century, there were also two other European courts that recruited Scandinavians:\*[5] Kievan Rus' c. 980–1060 and London 1018–1066 (the *Pingalið*).\*[5]

Composed primarily of Norsemen and Rus for the first 100 years, the guard began to see increased inclusion of Anglo-Saxons after the successful invasion of England by the Normans. By the time of the Emperor Alexios Komnenos in the late 11th century, the Byzantine Varangian Guard was largely recruited from Anglo-Saxons and “others who had suffered at the hands of the Vikings and their cousins the Normans”. The Anglo-Saxons and other Germanic peoples shared with the Vikings a tradition of faithful (to death if necessary) oath-bound service, and after the Norman conquest of England there were many fighting men who had lost their lands and former masters and looked for a living elsewhere.

The Varangian Guard not only provided security for the Byzantine Emperors, but also participated in many wars, often playing a decisive role, since they were usually used at critical moments of a battle. By the late 13th century Varangians were mostly ethnically assimilated by Byzantine Greeks, though the guard operated until at least mid-14th century. In 1400 there were still some people identifying themselves as “Varangians” in Constantinople.

### 14.1 History

The earliest members of the Varangian guard came from Kievan Rus'. A treaty between Rus' and the Byzantine empire under Michael III was agreed in 874 after a period of hostilities. A clause in the treaty obliged Rus' to provide men for Byzantine service. Renewed hostilities between 907 and 911 ended with a new treaty under which any Rus' who chose could serve Byzantium as a right.\*[7]

As early as 911, Varangians are mentioned as fighting as



An illumination of a scene from the Skylitzes Chronicle, depicting a Thracesian woman killing a Varangian who tried to rape her, whereupon his comrades praised her and gave her his possessions\* [6]

mercenaries for the Byzantines. About 700 Varangians served along with Dalmatians as marines in Byzantine naval expeditions against the Emirate of Crete in 902 and a force of 629 returned to Crete under Constantine Porphyrogenitus in 949. A unit of 415 Varangians was involved in the Italian expedition of 936. It is also recorded that there were Varangian contingents among the forces that fought the Arabs in Syria in 955. During this period, the Varangian mercenaries were included in the *Great Companions* (Gr. Μεγάλη Εταιρεία).

In 988 Basil II requested military assistance from Vladimir I of Kiev to help defend his throne. In compliance with the treaty made by his father after the Siege of Dorostolon (971), Vladimir sent 6,000 men to Basil. Vladimir took the opportunity to rid himself of his most unruly warriors which in any case he was unable to pay.\* [8] This is the presumptive date for the formal, permanent institution of an elite guard.\* [9] In exchange for the warriors, Vladimir was given Basil's sister, Anna, in marriage. Vladimir also agreed to convert to Christianity and to bring his people into the Christian faith.

In 989 these Varangians, led by Basil II himself, landed at Chrysopolis to defeat the rebel general Bardas Phokas. On the field of battle, Phokas died of a stroke in full view of his opponent; upon the death of their leader, Phokas' troops turned and fled. The brutality of the Varangians was noted when they pursued the fleeing army and “cheerfully hacked them to pieces” .

These men formed the nucleus of the Varangian Guard, which saw extensive service in southern Italy in the eleventh century, as the Normans and Lombards worked to extinguish Byzantine authority there. In 1018, Basil II received a request from his catepan of Italy, Basil Boioannes, for reinforcements to put down the Lombard revolt of Melus of Bari. A detachment of the Varangian Guard was sent and in the Battle of Cannae, the Byzantines achieved a decisive victory.

The Varangians also participated in the partial reconquest of Sicily from the Arabs under George Maniakes in 1038.

Here, they fought alongside Normans recently arrived in Italy seeking adventure and Lombards from Byzantine-held Apulia. A prominent member of the Guard at this time was Harald Hardrada, later King of Norway as Harald III (1046 to 1066). However, when Maniakes ostracised the Lombards by publicly humiliating their leader, Arduin, the Lombards deserted and the Normans and Varangians followed them.

Not long after, the catepan Michael Doukeianos had a force of Varangians stationed at Bari. On 16 March 1041 they were called up to fight the Normans near Venosa and many drowned in the subsequent retreat across the Ofanto. In September Exaugustus Boioannes was sent to Italy with only a small contingent of Varangians to replace the disgraced Doukeianos. On 3 September 1041 they were defeated in battle by the Normans.

Many of the last catepans were sent from Constantinople with Varangian units. In 1047 John Raphael was sent to Bari with a contingent of Varangians, but the Bariots refused to receive his troops and he spent his term at Otranto. Twenty years later, in 1067, the last Byzantine catepan in southern Italy, Mabrika, arrived with Varangian auxiliaries and took Brindisi and Taranto. At the disastrous Battle of Manzikert in 1071, virtually all the Emperor’s Guards fell around him.\* [10]



*Viking expeditions: depicting the immense breadth of their voyages through most of Europe, the Mediterranean Sea, Northern Africa, Asia Minor, the Arctic and North America*

Composed primarily of Scandinavians for the first 100 years, the guard began to see increased inclusion of Anglo-Saxons after the successful invasion of England by the Normans. In 1088 a large number of Anglo-Saxons and Danes emigrated to the Byzantine Empire by way of the Mediterranean.\* [11] One source has more than 5,000 of them arriving in 235 ships. Those who did not enter imperial service settled on the Black Sea coast, building and garrisoning the

town of Civetot for Alexios I.\*[12] Those who did became so vital to the Varangians that the Guard was commonly called the *Englinbarrangoi* (Anglo-Varangians) from that point. In this capacity they fought in Sicily against the Normans under Robert Guiscard, who unsuccessfully sought to invade the lower Balkans as well.

Writing about the unit as it was in 1080, the chronicler and princess Anna Komnene refers to these “axe-bearing barbarians” as being “from Thule”, likely a reference to the British Isles or Scandinavia.\*[13] Likewise, the Byzantine civil-servant, soldier and historian John Kinnamos calls these “axe-bearers” which guarded the Emperor “the British nation, which has been in service to the Romans’ Emperors from a long time back”.\*[14] Kinnamos was writing in the later 12th century, indicating perhaps that the more Dane and Saxon composition of the guard continued to the point of the Fourth Crusade.

The Varangians relied on a long axe as their main weapon, although they were often skilled swordsmen or archers as well. In some sources, such as Anna Komnene's *The Alexiad*, they are described as mounted; both Vikings and elite Anglo-Saxon warriors routinely used horses for strategic mobility even though they normally fought on foot. The guard was stationed primarily around Constantinople, and may have been barracked in the Bucoleon palace complex. The guard also accompanied armies into the field, and Byzantine chroniclers (as well as several notable Western European and Arab chroniclers) often note their battlefield prowess, especially in comparison to the local barbarian peoples. They were vital to the Byzantine victory under the emperor John II Komnenos at the Battle of Beroia in 1122. The Varangians hacked their way through the enemy's circle of Pecheneg wagons, collapsing the Pecheneg position and causing a general rout in their camp.\*[14]

The Varangians were described by 11th-century Byzantine historian Michael Psellus as thus: “The whole group carry shields and brandish on their shoulders a certain single-edged, heavy-iron weapon”, which is understood to have been the *daneaxe*\*[15] (many Byzantine writers referred to them as “axe-bearing barbarians”, *pelekyphoroi barbaroi*, rather than as Varangians).\*[11] A mistranslation of the Greek text however has led some to refer to the weapon as a *rhomphaia*,\*[16] which most likely occurred as a product of Atticism in Byzantine literature.\*[15]

They were prominent in the defence of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade. Of the role of the guard, it is said that “the fighting was very violent and there was hand to hand fight with axes and swords, the assailants mounted the walls and prisoners were taken on both sides”.\*[11] The latest mention of Varangian guard is in the Greek version of the *Chronicle of the Morea*, which state this unit escorted the Prince of Achaia away to prison after the Battle of Pelag-

onia in 1259; historian D. J. Geanakoplos suggests they were reconstituted by Theodore I Laskaris to strengthen his claim as the rightful Emperor.\*[17] People identified as Varangians were to be found in Constantinople around 1400.\*[18]

## 14.2 Function

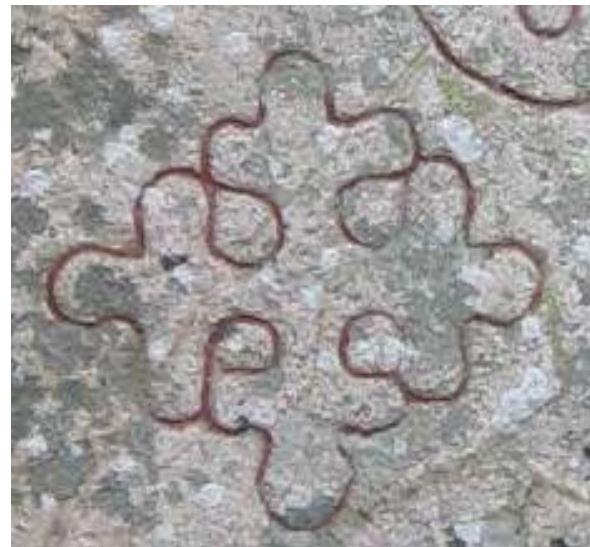
The duties and purpose of the Varangian Guard were similar—if not identical—to the services provided by the Kievan *druzhina*, the Norwegian *hird*, and the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon *housecarls*. The Varangians served as the personal bodyguard\*[19] of the emperor, swearing an oath of loyalty to him; they had ceremonial duties as retainers and acclamers and performed some police duties, especially in cases of treason and conspiracy. They were headed by a separate officer, the *akolouthos*, who was usually a native Byzantine.

The Varangian Guard was only used in battle during critical moments, or where the battle was most fierce.\*[20] Contemporary Byzantine chroniclers note with a mix of terror and fascination that the “Scandinavians were frightening both in appearance and in equipment, they attacked with reckless rage and neither cared about losing blood nor their wounds”.\*[20] The description probably refers to berserkers, since this state of trance is said to have given them superhuman strength and no sense of pain from their wounds.\*[20] When the Byzantine Emperor died, the Varangians had the unique right of running to the imperial treasury and taking as much gold and as many gems as they could carry, a procedure known in Old Norse as *polutasvarf* (“palace pillaging”).\*[20] This privilege enabled many Varangians to return home as wealthy men, which encouraged even more Scandinavians to enlist in the Guard in *Miklagarðr* (Swedish = Miklagård = ‘The Great City’, i.e. Constantinople).\*[20]

The loyalty of the Varangians became a trope of Byzantine writers. Writing about her father Alexius's seizing of the Imperial throne in 1081, Anna Komnene notes that he was advised not to attack the Varangians who still guarded the Emperor Nikephoros for the Varangians “regard loyalty to the emperors and the protection of their persons as a family tradition, a kind of sacred trust”. This allegiance, she noted, “they preserve inviolate, and will never brook the slighted hint of betrayal”.\*[21] Unlike the native Byzantine guards so mistrusted by Basil II, the Varangian guards' loyalties lay with the position of Emperor, not the man that sat on the throne. This was made clear in 969 when the guards failed to avenge the death by assassination of Emperor Nikephoros II. A servant had managed to call for the guards while the Emperor was being attacked, but when they arrived he was dead. They immediately knelt before

John Tzimiskes, Nikephoros' murderer and hailed him as Emperor. “Alive they would have defended him to the last breath: dead there was no point in avenging him. They had a new master now.” \*[22]

This reputation exceeds the truth in at least two recorded instances. In 1071, after Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes was defeated by Sultan Alp Arslan, a palace coup was staged before he could return to Constantinople. Caesar John Doukas used the Varangian guard to depose the absent emperor, arrest Empress Eudoxia, and proclaim his nephew, stepson of Diogenes Michael VII, as emperor. Thus, instead of defending their absent emperor, the Varangians were used by the usurpers—proving their loyalty to the throne, if not always the current occupier of that throne. In a more sinister episode, the historian John Zonaras reports the guard revolting against Nikephoros III Botaneiates after the blinding of the general Nikephoros Bryennios in 1078, “planning to kill him” but being suppressed by loyal troops. They subsequently asked for and received a pardon.\*[23]



*The Byzantine cross, on U 161, a cross which is today the coat of arms of the municipality of Täby*

### 14.3 Runestones

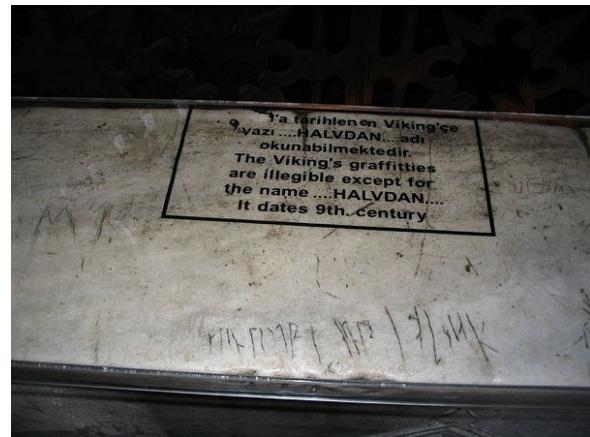
Main articles: Varangian Runestones, Greece Runestones, Italy Runestones and Ingvar Runestones

There are a number of raised stone memorials called



*Map of geographic distribution of Varangian Runestones*

runestones throughout Scandinavia. Many date to the Viking age, but there are also many associated with the



*One of the runic inscriptions in Hagia Sophia, probably carved by members of the Varangian Guard*

Varangian Guards. These Varangian runestones commemorate various fallen warriors through carved runes, and mention voyages to the East (*Austr*) or the Eastern route (*Austrvegr*), or to more specific eastern locations such as Garðaríki (what is today Russia and Ukraine). The losses that the Varangian Guard suffered are reflected by the largest group of runestones that talk of foreign voyages, such as those termed the Greece Runestones.\*[24] These were raised by former members of the Varangian Guard, or in their memory. A smaller group consists of the four Italy Runestones which were raised in memory of members of the Varangian Guard who died in southern Italy.

The oldest of the Greece runestones are six stones in the style RAK, a style which is dated to the period before 1015

AD.\*[25] The group consists of Skepptuna runestone U 358, Västra Ledinge runestone U 518, Nälberga runestone Sö 170 and Eriksstad runestone Sm 46.\*[26]

One of the more notable of the later runestones in the style Pr4 is Ed runestone U 112, a large boulder at the western shore of the lake of Ed. It tells that Ragnvaldr, the captain of the Varangian Guard, had returned home where he had the inscriptions made in memory of his dead mother.\*[26]

The youngest runestones, in the style Pr5, such as Ed runestone U 104 (presently in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford), are dated to the period 1080–1130, after which runestones became unfashionable.\*[26]

The Varangians did not return home without being imprinted by Byzantine culture in one way or another, as exemplified by the Byzantine cross carved on the early eleventh century Risbyle runestone U 161, and which today is the coat-of-arms of Täby.\*[27] The runes were made by the Viking Ulf of Borresta, see Orkesta runestone U 344, in memory of another Ulf, in Skålhamra, and at the request of the latter's father.\*[27]

## 14.4 Norse sagas

According to the sagas, the West Norse entered the service of the Guard considerably later than the East Norse. The Laxdela saga, informs that the Icelander Bolli Bollason, born c. 1006, was the first known Icelander or Norwegian in the Varangian Guard.\*[28] Travelling to Constantinople via Denmark, he spent many years in the Varangian Guard; “and was thought to be the most valiant in all deeds that try a man, and always went next to those in the forefront.”\*[29] The saga also records the finery his followers received from the Emperor, and the influence he held after his return to Iceland:

Bolli rode from the ship with twelve men, and all his followers were dressed in scarlet, and rode on gilt saddles, and all were they a trusty band, though Bolli was peerless among them. He had on the clothes of fur which the Garth-king had given him, he had over all a scarlet cape; and he had Footbiter girt on him, the hilt of which was dight with gold, and the grip woven with gold, he had a gilded helmet on his head, and a red shield on his flank, with a knight painted on it in gold. He had a dagger in his hand, as is the custom in foreign lands; and whenever they took quarters the women paid heed to nothing but gazing at Bolli and his grandeur, and that of his followers.\*[30]

The Varangian Guard is mentioned also in *Njal's Saga* in reference to Kolskegg—an Icelander said to have come first to Holmgard (Novgorod) and then on to Miklagard (Constantinople), where he entered the Emperor's service. “The last that was heard of him was, that he had wedded a wife there, and was captain over the Varangians, and stayed there till his death day.” \*[31]

Perhaps the most famous member of the Varangian Guard was the future king Harald Sigurdsson III of Norway, known as Harald Hardråde (“Hard-ruler”).\*[32] Having fled his homeland, Harald went first to Gardariki and then on to Constantinople, where he arrived in 1035. He participated in eighteen battles and during his service fought against Arabs in Anatolia and Sicily under General George Maniakes, as well as in southern Italy and Bulgaria. An extensive account of Harald Sigurdsson's journeys is found in Harald Sigurdsson's Saga.

During his time in the Varangian Guard Harald earned the titles of *manglavites* and *spatharokandidatos*. But his service ended with his imprisonment for misappropriation of imperial plunder taken during his command. He was released upon the dethronement of the Emperor Michael V, and saga sources suggest he was the one sent to blind the Emperor when he and his uncle fled to the church of Studion Monastery and clung to the altar.

Harald then sought to leave his post, but was denied this. He eventually escaped and returned home in 1043, eventually dying at the Battle of Stamford Bridge while invading England in 1066.

The Varangian Guard regained some of its old Scandinavian flavour when Harald Hardråde's grandson, Sigurd I of Norway, went on the Norwegian Crusade to the Holy land. After fighting battles against the Muslims, King Sigurd in 1110 let the rest of his force, who originally numbered 6000 men, join the Varangian Guard. King Sigurd returned home with less than a hundred of his personal Guard.

Most of the Old Norse narratives which deals with Norwegians or Icelanders in the Varangian Guard are from the 13th century, and bear witness to a continued interest and generally positive views towards Byzantium within the West Norse cultural area.\*[33]

## 14.5 See also

- Manglabites
- Optimatoi
- German Guard
- Thingmen

- Housecarl
- Leidang
- Hird
- Druzhina
- Byzantine bureaucracy
- Byzantine army
- Komnenian army
- Piraeus Lion (inscription made by Varangians)
- Varangian runestones
- Trade route from the Varangians to the Greeks
- New England (medieval)

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- [7] D'Amato, pp. 4, 6
- [8] D'Amato, pp. 6-7
- [9] D'Amato, p.4
- [10] Stephen Lowe, Battle Honours of the Varangian Guard
- [11] Stephen Turnbull, *The Walls of Constantinople, AD 324-1453*, pages 35-36, Osprey Publishing, ISBN 1-84176-759-X.
- [12] Buckler, p. 366.
- [13] Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 95.
- [14] John Kinnamos, "The Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenos" (Charles M. Brand, trans). New York, Columbia University Press, 1976, p. 16.
- [15] Timothy Dawson (May 1992). "The Varangian Rhomphaia: a Cautionary tale". *Varangian Voice* 22: 24–26.
- [16] Ian Heath and Angus McBride, *Byzantine Armies 886-1118*, 1979, p. 38: "Psellos however claims that every Varangian without exception was armed with shield and 'Rhomphaia'...a mixture of Byzantine and Scandinavian gear was in use..."
- [17] Deno J. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 43 and note
- [18] Mark Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army: Arms and Society 1204-1453* (Philadelphia 1992), pp. 272–275.
- [19] It is neither unusual nor particularly Byzantine that a foreign unit would gain such access and prestige. Augustus himself had a personal guard of Germans, the *collegium custodum corporis* or *Germani corporis custodes*, to protect himself from the native Praetorians. This guard was revived by Tiberius and continued until Nero.
- [20] Enoksen, Lars Magnar. (1998). *Runor : historia, tydning, tolkning*. Historiska Media, Falun. ISBN 91-88930-32-7 p. 135
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- [25] *Runriket Täby-Vallentuna – en handledning*, by Rune Edberg gives the start date 985, but the Rundata project includes also Iron Age and earlier Viking Age runestones in the style RAK.
- [26] The dating is provided by the Rundata project in a freely downloadable database.
- [27] The article 5. *Runriket - Risbyle* on the website of the Stockholm County Museum, retrieved July 7, 2007.
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## 14.8 External links

- English Refugees in the Byzantine Armed Forces: The Varangian Guard and Anglo-Saxon Ethnic Consciousness by Nicholas C.J. Pappas for De Re Militari.org

# Chapter 15

## Palman

**Palman** (Serbian: Палман, Latin: *Palmanus*\* [a]; fl. 1310-1363) was a German noble (dominus\*[2]), knight, and mercenary commander of the **Alemannic Guard** in the Serbian Imperial army of one of the most prolific European rulers of its time, Dušan the Mighty (r.1331–1355).

### 15.1 Life

#### 15.1.1 Origin and early life

Palman was born in ca. 1290, in Styria (present Austria), into a noble, Roman Catholic family. He had the facial condition of Cleft lip and palate. Palman was brought up at the court of his father, and at 13 years he became a court-sman. At 16 he became a squire (*armiger*) at the service of Henry III of Gorizia until 1310, when his father died and he returned to Styria and inherited all of the family holdings. He then served the House of Habsburg; one of the Dukes crowned Palman a knight during the marriage of his daughter. At 27 years, he operated his harelip in Venice, as he thought it would help him in getting his love, a countess back home who did not feel the same, however it did not help. Broken hearted, he joined knight tournaments all over the Holy Roman Empire where he fought for several years, losing a finger. After returning, and still not having his love answered, he decided to leave for the Holy land.

Palman and his entourage crossed into Zeta, a maritime province of the Serbian Kingdom, in hands of *Young King* (heir) Stephen Uroš IV Dušan, and decided to join his service as mercenaries.

#### 15.1.2 Service in the Serbian Empire

Palman became the “captain of the Alemannic Guard”, a mercenary unit under the direct hand of Dušan, consisting of him and his entourage (300 Germans). By January or February 1331, Dušan was quarreling with his father, King Stephen Uroš III,\* [3] perhaps pressured by the nobility.\* [4]

According to contemporary pro-Dušan sources, evil advisors turned Uroš III against his son; he decided to seize and exclude Dušan of his inheritance. Uroš III sent an army into Zeta against his son, the army ravaged Skadar, but Dušan had crossed the Bojana. A brief period of anarchy in parts of Serbia took place, before the father and son concluded peace in April 1331.\* [3] Three months later, Uroš III ordered Dušan to meet him. Dušan feared for his life and his advisors persuaded him to resist, so Dušan, including Palman's army, marched from Skadar to Nerodimlje, where they besieged his father.\* [3] Uroš III fled, and Dušan captured the treasury and family. Dušan then pursued his father, catching up with him at Petrić. On 21 August 1331, Uroš III surrendered, and on the advice or insistence of Dušan's advisors, he was imprisoned.\* [3] Dušan is crowned *King of All Serbian and Maritime lands* in the first week of September.\* [4] Palman too, had his title elevated.

Next he suppressed revolts in Zeta, by Bogoje, and in Serbian holdings of northern Albania, where he sent his nephew through his sister, Đorđe (Georg) with a band of the mercenaries.

In ca. 1336, it was decided that Dušan would divorce Jelena, his wife, as she had not yet given birth to an heir. At the same time, talks began with Austrian Duke Otto V, that his niece, German King Frederick the Fair's daughter Elizabeth be married to Dušan. Austrian delegates arrived at Kotor, in maritime Serbia, in the spring. The mediator of the matter was Palman. Elizabeth, whom they did not ask for consent, was appalled by the thought that she was pushed into the unknown world, in a barbarous land in the East, to marry a King of a different faith, who already was married. She became acute anxious and died. When Queen Jelena heard of the potential divorce, she hurried to conceive, and promised a son, as to calm Dušan. Indeed, in the winter, Jelena became pregnant with a son.\* [5]

When Dušan forged an alliance with the Byzantine fugitive John Cantacuzene and when it was agreed that both of them conquer Byzantine territory, Dušan took Veria, an important city in Thrace. As a security measure, Palman's army was sent to hold the town. However, Cantacuzene later that

year deceived Dušan and recovered Veria, he allowed Palman's troops to leave the city safely while he kept the city's Serbs as hostages.

In March 1355, a papal delegate led by bishop Peter Thomas arrived in Serbia in a mission to convert Serbs into Catholicism (the Serbs hoped to get help from Papal state against Turks), and Dušan, who was angry with Louis I of Hungary, prohibited the Catholics in his army to join the sermon of the papal bishop. When the German mercenaries joined a sermon, Dušan became enraged, but was quickly calmed, when the commander, Palman, said that they would defend their faith, not only by accepting punishment, but by entering war. The papal bishop, irritated with the failure of his mission, turned home and on the way visited Louis I, asking him to furiously continue the war on Serbia.\* [6]

In 1355 his unit was sent by Dušan to garrison the town of Klis (in the realm of Jelena, his sister) due to Croatian vassals to Hungary were advancing to Klis and Skradin.\* [7] After the death of Dušan in 1355, he worked for Teodora.\* [7] In 1363 he was a beneficiary of a will in Dubrovnik.\* [7]

## 15.2 Legacy

He is enumerated in Serb epic poetry, alongside his brother Kijaran (Chiarane), and nephew Đorđe (Georg).\*[8]

## 15.3 Annotations

1. ^ **Name:** He is mentioned as “Palman(us) Teutonicus Capitanus gentis armigens” .\*[8] His name has been given as **Palman Bracht** (Палман Брахт).

## 15.4 Notes

[1] Fine 1994, p. 313

[2]

[3] Fine 1994, p. 273

[4] Fine 1994, p. 274

[5] Corovic, “Istorija srpskog naroda”, Third period, ch. “VII. Stvaranje srpskog carstva”

[6] Corovic, “Istorija srpskog naroda”, Third period, ch. “VIII. Delo cara Dušana”

[7] Fine 1994, p. 341

[8] Istorija Srba

## 15.5 References

### 15.5.1 Secondary sources

- John V.A. Fine. (1994). *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*. The University of Michigan Press. ISBN 0-472-08260-4
- <http://www.politikin-zabavnik.rs/2008/2951/04.php>
- [http://www.novosti.rs/dodatni\\_sadrzaj/clanci.119.html:277309-Verni-vitez-Palman](http://www.novosti.rs/dodatni_sadrzaj/clanci.119.html:277309-Verni-vitez-Palman)

# Chapter 16

## Janissaries

For the Janissaries series of novels by Jerry Pournelle, see Janissaries series.

The **Janissaries** (Ottoman Turkish: يڭىچرى, *yeniçeri*, meaning “new soldier”) were elite infantry units that formed the Ottoman Sultan’s household troops and bodyguards. Sultan Murad I created the force in 1383. The number of Janissaries grew from 20,000 in 1575, to 49,000 (1591), dropped to a low of 17,000 (1648), then rebounded to 135,000 in 1826.\*[3]

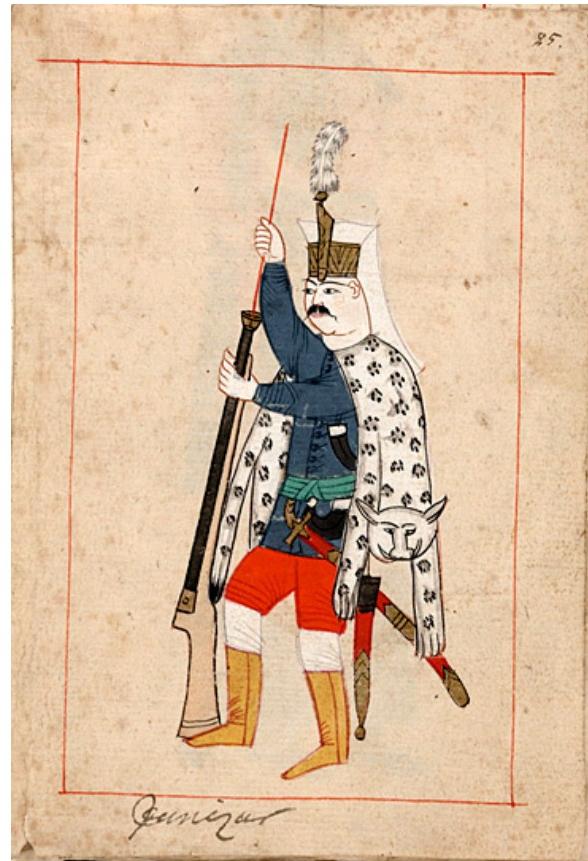
They began as an elite corps of slaves recruited from young Christian boys, and became famed for internal cohesion cemented by strict discipline and order. By 1620 they were hereditary and corrupt and an impediment to reform.\*[4] The corps was abolished by Sultan Mahmud II in 1826 in the Auspicious Incident in which 6,000 or more were executed.\*[5]

### 16.1 Origins

Some historians such as Patrick Kinross date the formation of the Janissaries to around 1365, during the rule of Orhan’s son Murad I, the first sultan of the Ottoman Empire.\*[6] The Janissaries became the first Ottoman standing army, replacing forces that mostly consisted of tribal warriors (*ghazis*) whose loyalty and morale were not always guaranteed.\*[6]

From the 1380s to 1648, the Janissaries were gathered through the *devşirme* system which was abolished in 1638.\*[7] This was the taking (enslaving) of non-Muslim boys,\*[8] notably Anatolian and Balkan Christians; Jews were never subject to *devşirme*, nor were children from Turkic families. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “in early days, all Christians were enrolled indiscriminately. Later, those from Albania, Bosnia, and Bulgaria were preferred.”\*\*[9] According to Dimitri Kitsikis, Christians from Northern Greece and Serbia were preferred.\*[10]

The Janissaries were *kapıkulları* (sing. *kapıkulu*),



Janissary, before 1657

“door servants” or “slaves of the Porte”, neither freemen nor ordinary slaves (*köle*).\*\*[11] They were subjected to strict discipline and were the first army to wear a uniform, but were paid salaries and pensions upon retirement and formed their own distinctive social class.\*[12] As such, they became one of the ruling classes of the Ottoman Empire, rivaling the Turkish aristocracy. The brightest of the Janissaries were sent to the palace institution, Enderun. Through a system of meritocracy, the Janissaries held enormous power, stopping all efforts at reform of the military.\*[7]

According to military historian Michael Antonucci and economic historians Glenn Hubbard and Tim Kane, the Turkish administrators would scour their regions (but especially the Balkans) every five years for the strongest sons of the sultan's Christian subjects. These boys (usually between the ages of 6 and 14) were then taken from their parents and given to Turkish families in the provinces to learn Turkish language and customs, and the rules of Islam. The recruits were indoctrinated into Islam, forced into circumcision and supervised 24 hours a day by eunuchs. They were subjected to severe discipline, being prohibited from growing a beard, taking up a skill other than soldiering, and marrying. As a result, the Janissaries were extremely well-disciplined troops, and became members of the *askeri* class, the first-class citizens or military class. Most were non-Muslims, because it was not permissible to enslave a Muslim.\* [7]

The janissary system was introduced in the 14th century. It was a similar system to the Iranian Safavid, Afsharid, and Qajar era *ghulams*, who were drawn from converted Circassians, Georgians, and Armenians, and in the same way as with the Ottoman's Janissaries who had to replace the unreliable ghazis, they were initially created as a counterbalance to the tribal, ethnic and favoured interests the Qizilbash gave, which make a system imbalanced.\* [13] The Janissary Corps was a trained and loyal group of slaves to the sultan. In the late 16th century, a sultan gave in to the pressures of the Corps and permitted Janissary children to become members of the Corps, a practice strictly forbidden for the previous 300 years. They also became rent-seeking and sought protection of their special rights and advantages. According to paintings of the era, they were also permitted to grow beards. Consequently, the formerly strict rules of succession became open to interpretation. While they advanced their own power, the Janissaries also helped to keep the system from changing in other progressive ways.

"The Janissary Corps was most responsible for the political stagnation of Istanbul" \* [7]

Greek Historian Dimitri Kitsikis in his book *Türk Yunan İmparatorluğu* ("Turco-Greek Empire")\* [10] states that many Christian families were willing to comply with the *devşirme* because it offered a possibility of social advancement. Conscripts could one day become Janissary colonels, statesmen who might one day return to their home region as governors, or even Grand Viziers or Beylerbeys (governor generals).

Some of the most famous Janissaries include George Kastrioti Skanderbeg, an Albanian who defected and led a 20-year Albanian revolt against the Ottomans. Another was Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, a Bosnian who became a grand vizier, served three sultans, and was the de facto ruler of the Ottoman Empire for more than 14 years.\* [14]

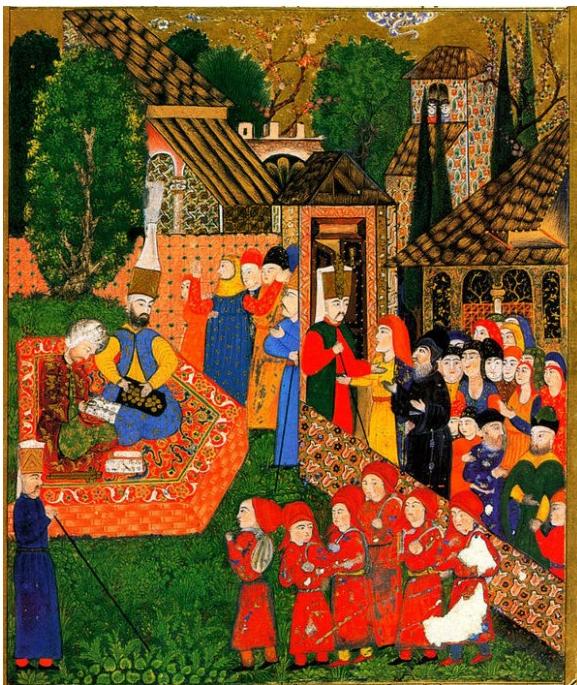


A Janissary Ağa in the year 1768.

## 16.2 Characteristics

The Janissary corps were distinctive in a number of ways. They wore unique uniforms, were paid regular salaries for their service, marched to music (the mehter), lived in barracks and were the first corps to make extensive use of firearms. A Janissary battalion was a close-knit community, effectively the soldier's family. By tradition, the Sultan himself, after authorizing the payments to the Janissaries, visited the barracks dressed as a Janissary trooper, and received his pay alongside the other men of the First Division.\* [16] They also served as policemen, palace guards, and firefighters during peacetime.\* [17] The Janissaries also enjoyed far better support on campaign than other armies of the time. They were part of a well-organized military machine, in which one support corps prepared the roads while others pitched tents and baked the bread. Their weapons and ammunition were transported and re-supplied by the cebeci corps. They campaigned with their own medical teams of Muslim and Jewish surgeons and their sick and wounded were evacuated to dedicated mobile hospitals set up behind the lines.\* [16]

These differences, along with an impressive war-record, made the Janissaries a subject of interest and study by foreigners during their own time. Although eventually the con-



*Registration of boys for the devşirme. Ottoman miniature painting from the Suleymanname, 1558.\* [15]*

cept of a modern army incorporated and surpassed most of the distinctions of the Janissaries and the corps was eventually dissolved, the image of the Janissary has remained as one of the symbols of the Ottomans in the western psyche. By the mid-18th century they had taken up many trades and gained the right to marry and enroll their children in the corps and very few continued to live in the barracks.\* [17] Many of them became administrators and scholars. Retired or discharged Janissaries received pensions, and their children were also looked after. This evolution away from their original military vocation was the major cause of the system's demise.

### 16.3 Recruitment, training and status

The first Janissary units were formed from prisoners of war and slaves, probably as a result of the sultan taking his traditional one-fifth share of his army's plunder in kind rather than cash; however the continuing enslaving of dhimmi constituted a continuing abuse of a subject population.\* [19] Initially the recruiters favoured Greeks and Albanians. As borders of the Ottoman Empire expanded, the devşirme was extended to include Bulgarians, Croats, Serbs, Armenians and later, in rare instances, Romanians, Georgians, Poles, Ukrainians and southern Russians. The



*Mustafa Kemal Atatürk wearing the traditional Janissary uniform. The large flap of the headdress was in imitation of the sleeve of Hajji Bektash, founder of the Bektashi dervishes, who laid his hand on early Janissaries to give his blessing.\* [18]*

Janissaries first began enrolling outside the devşirme system during the reign of Sultan Murad III (1574–1595).

After this period, volunteers were enrolled, mostly of Turkish origin.\* [16] By 1683, Sultan Mehmet IV abolished the devşirme, as increasing numbers of originally Muslim Turkish families had already enrolled their own sons into the force hoping for a lucrative career.\* [16]

The prescribed daily rate of pay for entry-level Janissaries in the time of Ahmet I was three Akches. Promotion to a cavalry regiment implied a minimum salary of 10 Akches.\* [20] Janissaries received a sum of 12 Akches every three months for clothing incidentals and 30 Akches for weaponry with an additional allowance for ammunition as well.\* [21]

### 16.4 Training

When a Christian boy was recruited under the devşirme system, he would first be sent to selected Turkish families in the provinces to learn how to speak Turkish, the rules of Islam (i.e. to be converted to Islam) and the customs and



A 15th-century Janissary drawing by Gentile Bellini, who also painted the renowned portrait of Sultan Mehmed II.

cultures of Ottoman society. After completion of this period, acemi (rookie) boys would be gathered to be trained in Enderun “acemi oğlan” school at the capital city. At the school, young cadets would be selected for their talents in different areas to train as engineers, artisans, riflemen, clerics, archers, artillery, etc. Janissaries trained under strict discipline with hard labour and in practically monastic conditions in *acemi oğlan* (“rookie” or “cadet”) schools, where they were expected to remain celibate. Unlike other Muslims, they were expressly forbidden to wear beards, only a moustache. These rules were obeyed by Janissaries, at least until the 18th century when they also began to engage in other crafts and trades, breaking another of the original rules. In the late 16th century a sultan gave in to the pressures of the Janissary Corps and permitted Janissary children to become members of the Corps, a practice strictly forbidden for 300 years. They also became Rent-seeking and made goals to protect their special rights and advantages. Consequently succession rules, formerly strict, became open to interpretation. They gained their own power but kept the system from changing in other progressive ways. “The Janissary Corps was most responsible for the political stagnation of Istanbul.” \* [7]

For all practical purposes Janissaries belonged to the Sultan and they were regarded as the protectors of the throne and the Sultan. Janissaries were taught to consider the corps as their home and family, and the Sultan as their father. Only

those who proved strong enough earned the rank of true Janissary at the age of 24 or 25. The Ocak inherited the property of dead Janissaries, thus acquiring wealth. Janissaries also learned to follow the dictates of the dervish saint Haji Bektaş Veli, disciples of whom had blessed the first troops. Bektaş served as a kind of chaplain for Janissaries. In this and in their secluded life, Janissaries resembled Christian military orders like the Knights Hospitaller. As a symbol of their devotion to the order, Janissaries wore special hats called “böرك”. These hats also had a holding place in front, called the “kaşıklık”, for a spoon. This symbolized the “kaşık kardeşliği”, or the “brotherhood of the spoon”, which reflected a sense of comradeship among the Janissaries who ate, slept, fought and died together.\* [7]

## 16.5 Janissary corps



A pair of Solaks, the janissary archer bodyguard of the Sultan

See also: List of Ottoman titles and appellations

The corps was organized in *ortas*. An *orta* (equivalent to

a battalion) was headed by a çorbaci. All *ortas* together comprised the Janissary corps proper and its organization, named *ocak* (literally “hearth”). Suleiman I had 165 *ortas* and the number increased over time to 196. While the Sultan was the supreme commander of the Ottoman Army and of the Janissaries in particular, the corps was organized and led by a commander, the *ağa*. The corps was divided into three sub-corps:

- the *cemaat* (frontier troops; also spelled *jemaat*), with 101 *ortas*
- the *beyliks* or *beuluks* (the Sultan's own bodyguard), with 61 *ortas*
- the *sekban* or *seirnen*, with 34 *ortas*

In addition there were also 34 *ortas* of the *ajemi* (cadets). A semi-autonomous Janissary corps was permanently based in Algiers.

Originally Janissaries could be promoted only through seniority and within their own *orta*. They could leave the unit only to assume command of another. Only Janissaries' own commanding officers could punish them. The rank names were based on positions in the kitchen staff or the royal hunters, perhaps to emphasise that Janissaries were servants of the Sultan. Local Janissaries, stationed in a town or city for a long time, were known as *yerliy়as*.

## 16.6 Corps strength

Even though the Janissaries were part of the royal army and personal guards of the sultan, the corps was not the main force of the Ottoman military. In the classical period, Janissaries comprised only one tenth of the overall Ottoman army, while the traditional Turkish cavalry made up the main battle force. According to David Nicolle, the number of Janissaries in the 14th century was 1,000 and about 6,000 in 1475. The same source estimates the number of Timarli Sipahi, the provincial cavalry which constituted the main force of the army at 40,000.\*[1]

Documentation from the 1620s and 1630s recording troop mobilization levels for two middle sized campaigns suggest that at a time when full Janissary membership in the Istanbul barracks amounted to some 30,000 men those actually deployed at the front ranged between 20,000 and 25,000.\*[22]

A roll call held in Hungary in 1541, reflecting the actual deployed strength of the Ottoman regular army forces participating in campaign, registered 15,612 men as present. Of these approximately 6,350 were Janissaries, 3,700 were Sipahis and another 1,650 were members of the Artillery corps. The remaining one quarter (roughly 4,100 men)

were mostly non-combatants. Information for the year 1660 when the only active front was in Transylvania (siege of Varat/Oradea in July/August) indicates 18,013 actives out of a total Janissary enrollment of 32,794. It does not follow from the fact that 18,000 Janissaries were present for salary distributions in the field that even they took a very active role in the fighting.\*[23]

## 16.7 Equipment

Further information: Rise of the Ottoman Empire and Growth of the Ottoman Empire

During the initial period of formation, Janissaries were



Janissary rifles from the year 1826.

expert archers, but they began adopting firearms as soon as such became available during the 1440s. The siege of Vienna in 1529 confirmed the reputation of their engineers, e.g. sappers and miners. In melee combat they used axes and kilijs. Originally in peacetime they could carry only clubs or daggers, unless they served as border troops. Turkish yatagan swords were the signature weapon of the Janissaries, almost a symbol of the corps. Janissaries who guarded the palace (Zülüflü Baltacılar) carried long-shafted axes and halberds.

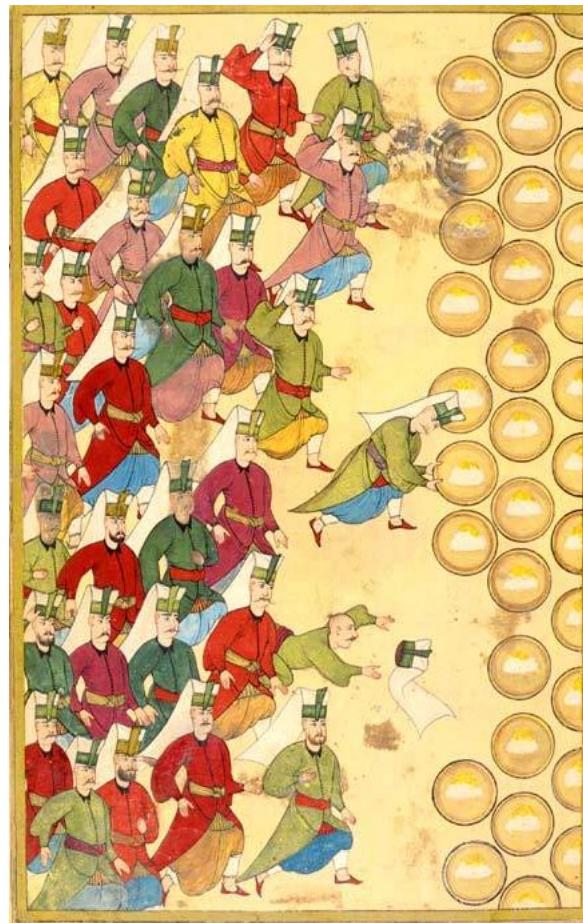
By the early 16th century, the Janissaries were equipped with and were skilled with muskets.\*[24] In particular, they used a massive “trench gun”, firing an 80-millimetre (3.1 in) ball, which was “feared by their enemies”.\* [24] Janissaries also made extensive use of early grenades and hand cannons, such as the abus gun.\*[16] Pistols were not initially popular but they became so after the Cretan War (1645–1669).\* [25]

## 16.8 Battles

The Ottoman Empire used Janissaries in all its major campaigns, including the 1453 capture of Constantinople, the defeat of the Egyptian Mamluks and wars against Hungary and Austria. Janissary troops were always led to the battle

by the Sultan himself, and always had a share of the loot. The Janissary corps was the only infantry division of the Ottoman army. In battle the Janissaries' main mission was to protect the Sultan, using cannon and smaller firearms, and holding the center of the army against enemy attack during the strategic fake forfeit of Turkish cavalry. The Janissary corps also included smaller expert teams: explosive experts, engineers and technicians, sharpshooters (with arrow and rifle) and sappers who dug tunnels under fortresses, etc.

- Janissaries battling the Knights Hospitaller during the Siege of Rhodes in 1522.
  - Battle of Mohács, 1526.\*[1]
  - A Janissary, a pasha and cannon batteries at the Siege of Esztergom in 1543.
  - Sultan Murad III's expedition to Revan.\*[2]
1. ^ Lokman (1588). "Battle of Mohács (1526)". *Hünernâme*.
  2. ^ Osman, Nakkas (1597). "Expedition to Revan". *Shahin-Shah-nâma*, Topkapi Sarai Museum, Ms B.200, folio 102a.



## 16.9 The Decline of the Janissaries

The Janissaries were once a valiant military force for the Ottoman Empire, but by the 18th century that was not the case. The reason for this was because their discipline had decreased because the Janissaries had grown accustomed to a civilian life. Instead of being a full-time standing army whose only job was to train, the Janissaries began engaging in business and having families. These non-military activities and privileges made them less inclined towards combat. As a result, the military might of the Ottoman Empire began to decline.

## 16.10 Revolts and disbandment

As Janissaries became aware of their own importance they began to desire a better life. By the early 17th century Janissaries had such prestige and influence that they dominated the government. They could mutiny and dictate policy and hinder efforts to modernize the army structure. They could change Sultans as they wished through palace coups. They made themselves landholders and tradesmen. They would also limit the enlistment to the sons of former Janissaries who did not have to go through the original training period

*Banquet (Safranpilav) for the Janissaries, given by the Sultan. If they refused the meal, they signaled their disapproval of the Sultan. In this case they accept the meal. Ottoman miniature painting, from the Surname-i Vehbi (1720) at the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul.*

in the *acemi oğlan*, as well as avoiding the physical selection, thereby reducing their military value. When Janissaries could practically extort money from the Sultan and business and family life replaced martial fervour, their effectiveness as combat troops decreased. The northern borders of the Ottoman Empire slowly began to shrink southwards after the second Battle of Vienna in 1683.

In 1449 they revolted for the first time, demanding higher wages, which they obtained. The stage was set for a decadent evolution, like that of the Streltsy of Tsar Peter's Russia or that of the Praetorian Guard which proved the greatest threat to Roman emperors, rather than an effective protection. After 1451, every new Sultan felt obligated to pay each Janissary a reward and raise his pay rank (although since early Ottoman times, every other member of the Topkapi court received a pay raise as well). Sultan Selim II gave janissaries permission to marry in 1566, undermining the

exclusivity of loyalty to the dynasty. By 1622, the Janissaries were a “serious threat” to the stability of the Empire.<sup>\*[26]</sup> Through their “greed and indiscipline”, they were now a law unto themselves and, against modern European armies, ineffective on the battlefield as a fighting force.<sup>\*[26]</sup> In 1622, the teenage Sultan Osman II, after a defeat during war against Poland, determined to curb Janissary excesses and outraged at becoming “subject to his own slaves” tried to disband the Janissary corps blaming it for the disaster during the Polish war.<sup>\*[26]</sup> In the spring, hearing rumours that the Sultan was preparing to move against them, the Janissaries revolted and took the Sultan captive, imprisoning him in the notorious Seven Towers: he was murdered shortly afterwards.<sup>\*[26]</sup>

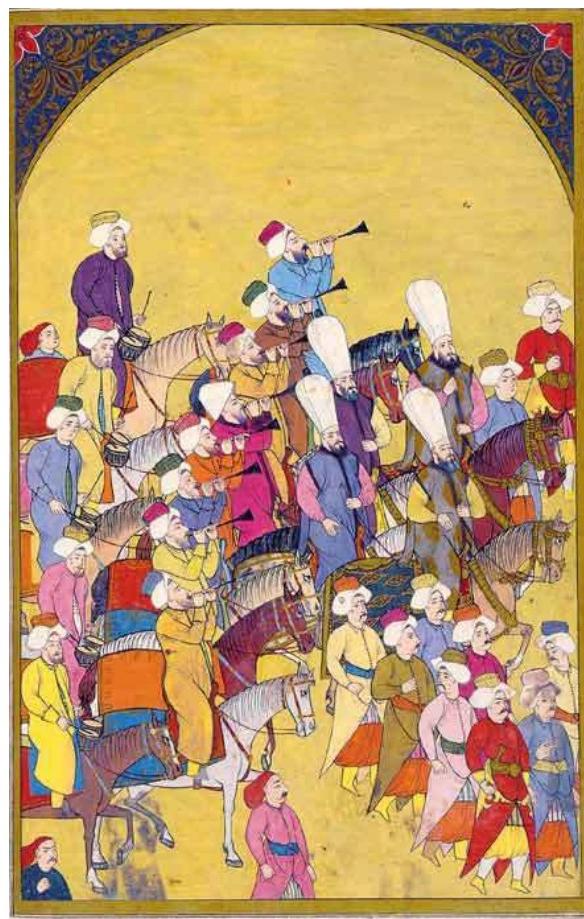
In 1804, the Dahias, the Jannissary junta that ruled Serbia at the time, had taken power in the *Sanjak of Smederevo* in defiance of the Sultan and they feared that the Sultan would make use of the Serbs to oust them. To forestall this they decided to execute all prominent nobles throughout Central Serbia, a move known as *Slaughter of the knezes*. According to historical sources of the city of Valjevo, heads of the murdered men were put on public display in the central square to serve as an example to those who might plot against the rule of the Janissaries. The event triggered the start of the Serbian revolution with the First Serbian uprising aimed at putting an end to the 300 years of Ottoman occupation of modern Serbia.<sup>\*[27]</sup>

In 1807 a Janissary revolt deposed Sultan Selim III, who had tried to modernize the army along Western European lines.<sup>\*[28]</sup> This modern army Selim III created was called Nizam-i Cedid. His supporters failed to recapture power before Mustafa IV had him killed, but elevated Mahmud II to the throne in 1808.<sup>\*[28]</sup> The Janissaries killed Selim III based off their own accusations that the Sultan failed respect the religion of Islam. When the Janissaries threatened to oust Mahmud II, he had the captured Mustafa executed and eventually came to a compromise with the Janissaries.<sup>\*[28]</sup> Ever mindful of the Janissary threat, the sultan spent the next years discreetly securing his position. The Janissaries' abuse of power, military ineffectiveness, resistance to reform and the cost of salaries to 135,000 men, many of whom were not actually serving soldiers, had all become intolerable.<sup>\*[29]</sup>

By 1826, the sultan was ready to move against the Janissary in favor of a more modern military. Historian Patrick Kinross suggests that Mahmud II incited them to revolt on purpose, describing it as the sultan's “coup against the Janissaries”.<sup>\*[5]</sup> The sultan informed them, through a fatwa, that he was forming a new army, organised and trained along modern European lines.<sup>\*[5]</sup> As predicted, they mutinied, advancing on the sultan's palace.<sup>\*[5]</sup> In the ensuing fight, the Janissary barracks were set in flames by artillery fire resulting in 4,000 Janissary fatalities.<sup>\*[5]</sup> The survivors were

either exiled or executed, and their possessions were confiscated by the Sultan.<sup>\*[5]</sup> This event is now called the Auspicious Incident. The last of the Janissaries were then put to death by decapitation in what was later called the blood tower, in Thessaloniki.

## 16.11 Janissary music



*Janissaries marching to Mehter martial tunes played by the Mehterân military band. Ottoman miniature painting, from the Surname-i Vehbi (1720) at the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul.*

Further information: Ottoman military band

The military music of the Janissaries was noted for its powerful percussion and shrill winds combining *kös* (giant timpani), *davul* (bass drum), *zurna* (a loud shawm), *naffir*, or *boru* (natural trumpet), *çevgan* bells, triangle, (a borrowing from Europe), and cymbals (*zil*), among others. Janissary music influenced European classical musicians such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven, both of whom composed music in the “Alla turca” style

(Mozart's Piano Sonata in A major, K. 331 (c. 1783), Beethoven's incidental music for *The Ruins of Athens*, Op. 113 (1811), and the final movement of Symphony no. 9), although the Beethoven example is now considered a march rather than Alla turca.\* [30]

Sultan Mahmud II abolished the *mehter* band in 1826 along with the Janissary corps. Mahmud replaced the mehter band in 1828 with a European style military band trained by Giuseppe Donizetti. In modern times, although the Janissary corps no longer exists as a professional fighting force, the tradition of Mehter music is carried on as a cultural and tourist attraction.

In 1952, the Janissary military band, *Mehterân*, was organized again under the auspices of the Istanbul Military Museum. They have performances during some national holidays as well as in some parades during days of historical importance. For more details, see Turkish music (style) and Mehter.

## 16.12 Popular culture

- Janissaries appear in many video games such as: *Europa Universalis IV*, *Atlantica Online*, *Assassin's Creed: Revelations*, *Rise of Nations*, *Empire Earth 2*, *Civilization IV: Beyond the Sword*, *Civilization V*, *Age of Empires 2: The Age of Kings*, *Age of Empires II: The Conquerors*, *Age of Empires 3*, *Medieval II: Total War*, *Empire: Total War* and *Napoleon: Total War*.
- *The Janissary Tree*, a novel by Jason Goodwin set in 19th-century Istanbul
- *The Sultan's Helmsman*, a historical novel of the Ottoman Navy and Renaissance Italy
- *The Historian*, a novel by Elizabeth Kostova
- "The Janissaries of Emilion", a short story by Basil Copper
- Janissaries are used to introduce the character of Eliza in *The King of the Vagabonds*, the second volume of *Quicksilver* by Neal Stephenson.
- The Janissary origin as an elite fighting corp trained from boy slaves is a central plot element in the film, *Dracula Untold*.
- The Janissaries are referenced in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as a point of comparison for the main character Changez, a Lahori working as an analyst for Underwood Samson in New York.

## 16.13 See also

- Devşirme system
- Ghilman
- Mamluk
- Military of the Ottoman Empire
- Saqaliba
- Genízaro

## 16.14 References

### 16.14.1 Notes

- [1] Nicolle, pp. 9–10.
- [2] Agoston, p. 50
- [3] George F. Nafziger (2001). *Historical Dictionary of the Napoleonic Era*. Scarecrow Press. pp. 153–54.
- [4] Alan Palmer, *The Decline and Fall of the Ottoman Empire* (1992) pp 23, 92–93
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- [6] Kinross, pp 48–52.
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- [19] Nicolle, p. 7.
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### 16.15 External links

- History of the Janissary Music
- Janissary section on German-language website about Ottoman empire (not yet exploited) (German)
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# Chapter 17

## Imperial Guards (Tang dynasty)

The **Imperial Guards** of the Tang Dynasty, also known as the **Forbidden Troops** (traditional Chinese: 禁軍, simplified Chinese: 禁军, pinyin: jìn jūn), evolved initially from honour bodyguards of the emperor and garrison of the Imperial capitals during its formation in early 7th century, into the only military force that remained under the control of the central authorities after the An Shi Rebellion which lasted from AD 755 to 763.

### 17.1 The Pioneers

The dynasty's founder was an aristocrat based in present day Taiyuan, and was an experienced soldier from his tenure as border commander. He launched his bid for power in AD 617 with only 30,000 troops, and by the time he defeated his rivals, he commanded more than 200,000 troops. About 30,000 volunteered to remain in service after general demobilisation, who became the pioneers of the Tang's hereditary Imperial Guards, and assigned the fertile lands in the region of Bai irrigation canal, north of the Wei River, which had been abandoned during the turmoils of the Sui-Tang transition wars. This body became known as the Pioneer Forbidden Guards (元从禁军).

The first body of the Imperial Guards were designated as bodyguards of the emperor, and would garrison the capitals and palaces.\*[1]

The mainstay of the empire's defence would be the fubing system, which assigned lands to farmers in return for periods of military service.

### 17.2 Introduction of new Guard units

In the beginning of the reign of Emperor Taizong, the monarch stationed a hundred soldiers skilled in archery at the northern gate of the palace. They became known as

the *Hundred Riders* (百騎), and accompanied the emperor during his hunting excursions.

In addition, seven companies of soldiers selected after trials of strength and skills were installed under the Northern Bureau (北衙) as additional bodyguards.

Gradually, other new units were added and stationed around the palace, their members chosen from upper class of societies who met the selection criteria of physical appearance, skills and strengths.

### 17.3 Yü Lin (Feathered Forest) and Long Wu (Dragon Martial) Guards

In AD 662, Tang's third emperor transferred some outstanding horsemen, archers and footmen of the fubing army into the new Yü Lin (羽林, literally *Feathered Forest*\*[2]) unit, and assigned them the duties of standing guard during Court sessions as well as imperial processions.

The *Hundred Riders* unit was expanded by Empress Wu to *Thousand Riders* (千騎), then further increased by Emperor Zhongzong to *Ten Thousand Riders* (万騎). This unit was instrumental in the ousting of Empress Wei's faction by the Imperial Prince Li LongJi in AD 710, and subsequently renamed as Long Wu (龙武, literally *Dragon Martial*). Only descendants of pioneers of the Tang Empire were selected into the Long Wu Guards.

In time, the appeal of serving in the Imperial Guard units waned, and many scions of influential clans resorted to hiring proxies to serve on their behalf. Thus, the quality of the "aristocratic" Long Wu guards levelled with that of the "commoner" Yü Lin guards.

## 17.4 Shen Wu (Divine Martial) Guards

By the time An Lushan revolted in AD 755, enrollment in the Imperial Guard units had declined to such an extent that there were only a thousand guardsmen escorting Emperor Xuanzong during his flight from the capital.

Emperor Xuanzong officially abdicated in favour of the Crown Prince Li Heng, who had to raise his own army in AD 757, which became known as the Shen Wu (神武, literally *Divine Martial*) Guards. Entry requirements had to be lowered when they could not recruit enough men from families of Court officials.

## 17.5 Shen Ce (Divine Stratagem) Army

Main article: Shence Army

During the An Shi rebellion, the loyal jiedushi Geshu Han brought his garrison from the northwestern border with Tibet to the central plains to rally to the emperor. Due to politicking, control of this army came under the eunuch Yu Chao'En, and was subsequently known as the Shen Ce Army (神策军), literally *Divine Stratagem*) Guards.

This unit was instrumental in assisting Emperor Daizong recover the Imperial capital Chang'an from Tibetan invaders in AD 763, and thus gained prominence and became the mainstay of the central authorities' military force.

The soldiers enjoyed better remuneration than those from other units. This led to other imperial military units to seek to come under its banner, expanding its numbers greatly. As a result, other Imperial Guard units declined.

Control of the Shen Ce Army fell into the hands of the palace eunuchs who used it to control the Tang emperors. Later on, the Shence Army deteriorated into little more than local bullies in the vicinity of the capital. Quality declined sharply as recruitment fell in numbers and they were unable to withstand the rebel forces of Huang Chao in AD 880.

In AD 903, after Zhu Wen deposed the last Tang Emperor and massacred the eunuchs in Chang'an, the last of Tang Imperial Guard units came to an end.

ing to each cardinal point of the compass. The fifth one, if designated, would be the central capital.

- [2] The term “Feathered Forest” as a name for Imperial Guards was first used during the Han Dynasty and came from the quotation “为国羽翼, 如林之盛”, literally translated “be wing-feathers of the state, flourishing as the forest.” . The term for “wing-feathers” are often used to refer to fully developed strength (noun) in Chinese terminology, a metaphor for a bird reaching maturity, with fully fledged feathers in its wings.

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## 17.6 References

[1] Though the main Court would remain in one city, Imperial China generally chose four, sometimes five capitals, accord-

# Chapter 18

## Imperial Guards Brigade



Portrait of the Imperial Bodyguard Zhanyinbao (1760)

The **Imperial Guards Brigade** (Chinese: 偃衛; pinyin: *shìwèi*) of the Qing dynasty were a select detachment of

Manchu and Mongol bannermen responsible for guarding the Forbidden City in Beijing, the emperor, and the emperor's family. The Imperial Guards were divided into three groups:<sup>\*[1]</sup> [1] the Guard, the Vanguard, and the Imperial Bodyguard.<sup>\*[2]</sup> [2]

### 18.1 Guard

The Guard (Manchu: *bayara*; simplified Chinese: 护军; traditional Chinese: 護軍; pinyin: *hùjūn*) corps was assigned to protect the imperial palace. Soldiers from the Manchu and Mongol banners could join. The Guard corps was about ten times the size of the Vanguard and Imperial Bodyguard.<sup>\*[2]</sup> [2]

### 18.2 Vanguard

The Vanguard (Manchu: *gabsihiyān*; simplified Chinese: 前锋; traditional Chinese: 前鋒; pinyin: *qiánfēng*) corps was assigned to march ahead of the emperor when he left the palace. Soldiers from the Manchu and Mongol banners could join. The Vanguard consisted of about 1500 men.<sup>\*[2]</sup> [2]

### 18.3 Imperial Bodyguard

The Imperial Bodyguard (Manchu: *hiya*; simplified Chinese: 領侍衛; traditional Chinese: 領侍衛; pinyin: *lǐngshìwèi*) corps was assigned to protect the emperor at all times. Only Manchu bannermen could join, and most members came from the upper three banners. Like the Vanguard, the Imperial Bodyguard consisted of about 1500 men.<sup>\*[2]</sup> [2]

## 18.4 See also

- Manchukuo Imperial Guards
- Shuai Jiao
- Wu Chien-ch'uan
- Wu Ch'u'an-yu
- Yang Lu-ch'an

## 18.5 References

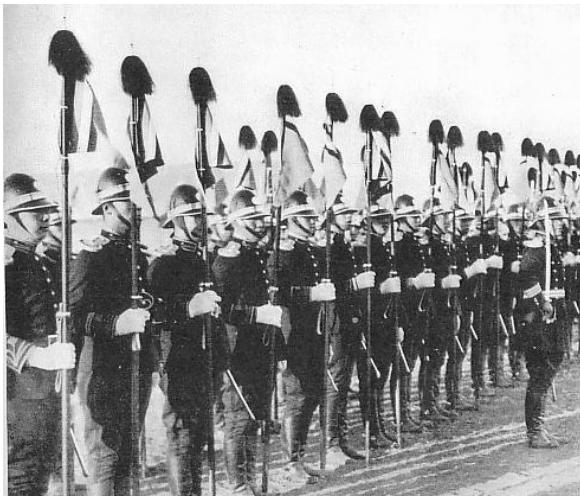
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# Chapter 19

## Manchukuo Imperial Guards

The **Manchukuo Imperial Guards** (Chinese: 禁衛隊) was the elite unit of the Manchukuo armed forces created in 1933. It was charged with the protection of the Kangde Emperor Puyi, and senior members of the Manchukuo civil government. Its headquarters was in the capital of Hsinking, near the Imperial Palace in the center of the city.

Initially, the Guard consisted of 200 men. Later, an independent brigade called the **Chinganyuchitui** or “Special Guard Corps” was formed for use in special operations during the Pacification of Manchukuo. It was effective in combat, and participated in the Ki Feng-lung District Subjugation in November 1932 and in anti-bandit operations.



*Manchukuo Imperial Guard in ceremonial uniform*

### 19.1 History

The Manchukuo Imperial Guard was patterned after the Imperial Guard of Japan, and was responsible primarily for the protection of the imperial household. Its members were selected from candidates of Manchu ethnic backgrounds, and were trained independently of the Manchukuo Imperial Army or the Japanese Kwantung Army. Although largely a ceremonial force, they received the latest firearms, and also carried Japanese-style swords (guntō) or sabres as dress weaponry. Their uniform was grey or black with silver or gold insignia, with a five-color, five pointed star on their helmets and kepis.

### 19.2 See also

- Imperial Guard of Japan
- Manchukuo Imperial Navy

### 19.3 References

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# Chapter 20

## Imperial Guard (Napoleon I)

*This article discusses the group of soldiers who acted as Napoleon Bonaparte's personal guard. For other uses of the term, see Imperial Guard (disambiguation)*



Grenadier of the Old Guard in 1813

The Imperial Guard (French: *Garde Impériale*) was orig-

inally a small group of elite soldiers of the French Army under the direct command of Napoleon I, but grew considerably over time. It acted as his bodyguard and tactical reserve, and he was careful of its use in battle. The Guard was divided into the staff, infantry, cavalry, and artillery regiments, as well as battalions of sappers and marines. The guard itself as a whole distinguished between the experienced veterans from less experienced members by being separated into three sections: the **Old Guard**, **Middle Guard** and **Young Guard**.

### 20.1 History

The Guard had its origin in the **Consular Guard** (*Garde des consuls*), created November 28, 1799, by the union of the Guard of the Directory (*Garde du Directoire exécutif*) and the Grenadiers of the Legislature (*Grenadiers près de la Réprésentation nationale*). These formations had for principal purpose the security of the executive and legislative branches of the French Republic and gathered a small number of soldiers, about a thousand. One may question their utility, as they did not oppose Napoleon's 18 Brumaire coup of 1799. The Consular Guard changed its name to the Imperial Guard on May 18, 1804. Its headquarters were located at the Pentemont Abbey in Paris.

Napoleon took great care of his Guard, particularly the Old Guard. The Grenadiers of the Old Guard were known to complain in the presence of the Emperor, giving them the nickname *Les Grognards*, the Grumbler. The Guard received better pay, rations, quarters, and equipment, and all guardsmen ranked one grade higher than all non-Imperial Guard soldiers. Other French soldiers even referred to Napoleon's Imperial Guard as "the Immortals." \*[1]

The Guard played a major part in the climax of the Battle of Waterloo. It was thrown into the battle at the last minute to salvage a victory for Napoleon. Completely out-numbered, it faced terrible fire from the British lines, and began to retreat. For the first (and only) time in its history the Mid-



*Memorial to the gunners of the Imperial Guard Artillery*

dle Guard retreated without orders. At the sight of this, Napoleon's army lost all hope of victory. The Middle Guard broke completely but the Old Guard (and some of the Young Guard) battalions held their formation and secured the retreat of the remainder of the French Army before being almost annihilated by British and Prussian artillery fire and cavalry charges.

The quote, "*La Garde meurt mais ne se rend pas!*" (*The Guard dies but does not surrender!*) is generally attributed to General Pierre Cambronne. It has been suggested that this was in fact said by another general of the Guard, Claude-Etienne Michel, during their last stand at the Battle of Waterloo.\* [2]\*[3]

## 20.2 Composition

The Guard was composed of three echelons. The Old Guard comprised some of the finest soldiers in Europe, who had served Napoleon since his earliest campaigns. The Middle Guard was composed of his veterans from the 1805 to 1809 campaigns. The Young Guard consisted of the best of the annual intake of conscripts and volunteers, and was never considered to be of quite the same caliber of the senior Guards, although its units were still superior to the nor-



*Napoleon reviewing the Guard during the Battle of Jena, October 14, 1806*

mal line regiments.

## 20.3 Numbers

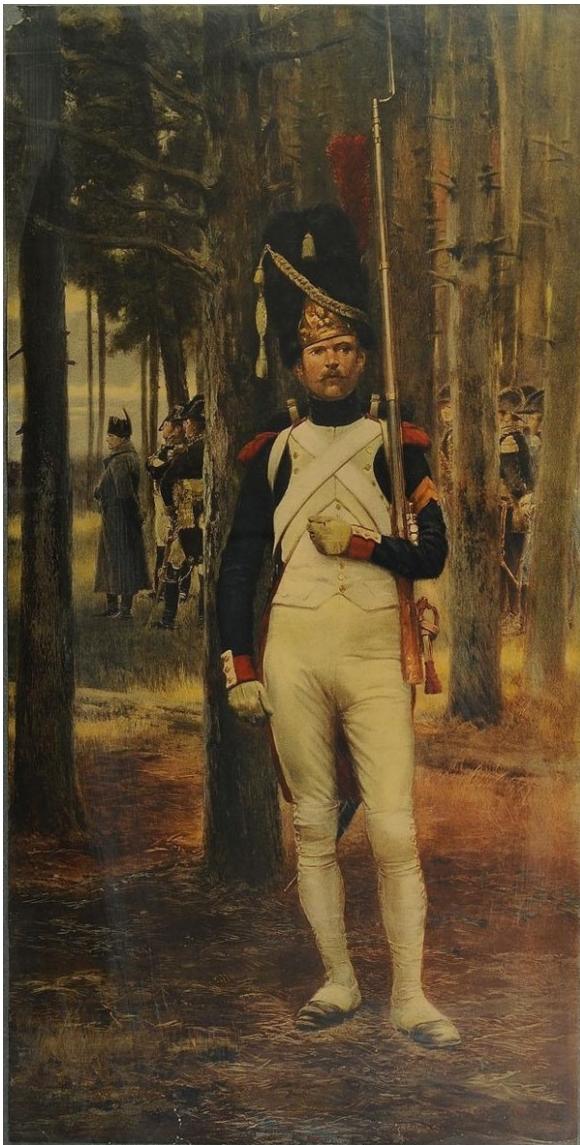
In 1804 the Guard numbered eight thousand men. By the time of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, it had swelled to just under 100,000 men. The Guard had its own artillery, infantry and cavalry components just like a normal Army corps.

## 20.4 General Staff of the Imperial Guard

Created soon after the creation of the Guard itself, the General Staff by 1806 included the four Colonel-Generals of the four divisions of the Guard, all Marshals of France in field rank. It also included an Inspector of Reviews, a Commissioner of War, 24 aides-de-camp, and other specialist officers, NCOs, and privates.

## 20.5 Foot regiments

The Old Guard regiments served in the 3rd Division of the Old Guard, while the rest of the foot regiments of the Guard



A grenadier of the Imperial Guard

served in the 1st and 2nd Divisions.

### 20.5.1 1st Foot Grenadiers Regiment

Created from the Grenadiers of the Consular Guard (*Gardes des Consuls*), the Foot Grenadiers (*1<sup>er</sup> Régiment de Grenadiers-à-Pied de la Garde Impériale*) were one of the oldest and most venerated of regiments in the French Army; classed as the Old Guard.



Officer belt buckle

### 20.5.2 2nd Foot Grenadiers Regiment

Created from the Grenadiers of the Consular Guard along with the 1st regiment, the *2<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Grenadiers-à-Pied de la Garde Impériale* was one of the oldest and most venerated of regiments in the French Army; classed as the Old Guard.

### 20.5.3 3rd Foot Grenadiers Regiment

This regiment was created as the Royal Guard in Holland, when Louis Napoleon, brother to Napoleon, was made King of Holland. After Holland became part of France, it became in 1810 the *3<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Grenadiers-à-Pied de la Garde Impériale*. Disbanded 15 February 1813. Re-raised on 8 April 1815, in place of the former Fusiliers-Grenadiers. Finally disbanded 24 September 1815.

### 20.5.4 4th Foot Grenadiers Regiment

A fourth grenadier regiment, the *4<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Grenadiers-à-Pied de la Garde Impériale*, was raised 9 May 1815. Disbanded 24 September 1815.

### 20.5.5 1st Foot Chasseur Regiment

Created at the same time as the Grenadiers of the Consular Guard, *1<sup>er</sup> Régiment de Chasseurs-à-Pied de la Garde Impériale* was one of the oldest and most venerated of regiments in the French Army; classed as the Old Guard.



*Grenadier of the 3<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Grenadiers-à-Pied de la Garde Impériale*



*Chasseurs of the Old Guard c.1811*

### 20.5.6 2nd Foot Chasseur Regiment

Created at the same time as the 1st Chasseur Regiment of the Consular Guard, the 2<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Chasseurs-à-Pied de la Garde Impériale was one of the oldest and most venerated of regiments in the French Army; classed as the Old Guard.

### 20.5.7 3rd Foot Chasseur Regiment

The 3<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Chasseurs-à-Pied de la Garde Impériale briefly existed during the 100 days campaign after Napoleon's escape from Elba.



*Chasseurs à pied de la Garde (Hippolyte Bellangé)*

### 20.5.8 4th Foot Chasseur Regiment

The 4<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Chasseurs-à-Pied de la Garde Impériale was also raised during the 100 days campaign after Napoleon's escape from Elba.

### 20.5.9 Fusiliers-Grenadiers

The Fusiliers-Grenadiers were the second regiment of Fusiliers created on December 15, 1806, from the 1st battalions of the Grenadier and Chasseur Vélites, forming a

regiment that was to be 1,800 men strong. Conscripts and men from the Compagnies de Reserve brought the new regiment up to four battalions of four companies each, 120 men to a company. They were disbanded on May 12, 1814.\*[4]

### 20.5.10 Fusiliers-Chasseurs

The Fusiliers-Chasseurs were created on October 19, 1806, from the 1st battalions of the Vélites of the Grenadiers and Chasseurs of the Guard; the regiment was to be 1,200 men strong. Men of the Compagnies de Reserve were added to bring the regiment up to four battalions of four companies each, 120 men to a company. In 1813 each battalion was enlarged by two more companies. They were disbanded on May 12, 1814.\*[5]

### 20.5.11 Tirailleurs Grenadiers

The first regiment to become known as the Young Guard, Tirailleurs Grenadiers (*1<sup>er</sup> Régiment de Tirailleurs de la Garde Impériale*) were raised in 1809 from conscripts, but they had to be able to read and write. A second regiment was formed later in the same year. In 1810 both were renamed *1<sup>e</sup> & 2<sup>e</sup> Regiments de Tirailleurs de la Garde Impériale*.

### 20.5.12 Tirailleurs Chasseurs

Further information: Voltigeurs

Two regiments of Tirailleurs Chasseurs were formed at the same time as the Tirailleurs Grenadiers, and were also included in the Young Guard. For the 1812 Campaign in Russia these were expanded to six regiments. Both became *5<sup>e</sup> & 6<sup>e</sup> Regiments de Tirailleurs de la Garde Impériale* in 1811.

During the 1813-14 campaigns the number of *Regiments de Tirailleurs de la Garde Impériale* was increased to sixteen although they rarely equaled the regiments of the Young Guard of 1811. The 7th, 8th and 9th were recruited from the 'Pupilles de la Garde', childsoldiers who were to become Napoleon's son's guard and who stayed in France during the Napoleon's invasion of Russia.

### 20.5.13 Voltigeurs of the Guard

Further information: Voltigeurs

Created from the Tirailleurs Chasseurs in 1810, the *Regiments de Voltigeurs de la Garde Impériale* became one of

the largest corps in the Guard, eventually absorbing the *Regiments de Conscrits-Chasseurs* to number sixteen regiments by 1814. The *14<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Voltigeurs de la Garde Impériale* was created from the Spanish volunteers that retreated with the French Army, and the *Régiment de Voltigeurs de la Garde Royale Espagnol*.

### 20.5.14 Conscripts Grenadiers

Created in 1809, the two Conscripts Grenadiers Regiments (*Régiment de Conscrip-Grenadiers*), though intended to provide a reserve for the Young Guard, was not included in the guard, receiving line infantry pay. The regiments became *3<sup>e</sup> & 4<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Tirailleurs de la Garde Impériale* in 1810.

### 20.5.15 Conscripts Chasseurs

Further information: Voltigeurs

Created in 1809, the Conscripts Chasseurs Regiment though intended to provide a reserve for the Young Guard, was not included in the guard, receiving Line Infantry pay. After 1811, the Conscripts-Chasseurs formed the 3rd and 4th regiments of the Voltigeurs of the Guard.

### 20.5.16 National Guard Regiment of the Guard

This regiment was created from the National Guard companies of the Northern Departments of France. The regiment was organized according to the line infantry tables, and in 1813 was renamed the 7th Regiment of Voltigeurs.

### 20.5.17 Flanquer Grenadiers and Chasseurs

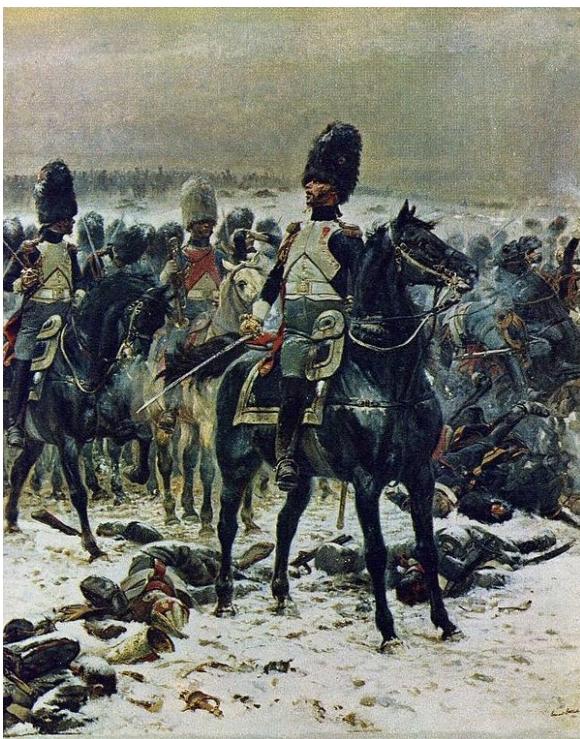
In preparation for the invasion of Russia, Napoleon ordered a further creation of units for the Guard that included *Régiment de Flanqueurs-Grenadiers de la Garde Impériale* and Flanquer Chasseurs Regiment (*Régiment de Flanqueurs-Chasseurs de la Garde Impériale*).

Illustrations of foot regiments by Adolphe de Chesnel

- Grenadier
- Foot Chasseur
- Fusilier Grenadiers
- Marines of the Guard

- Tirailleurs Grenadiers
- Voltigeurs of the Guard
- Foot Artillery
- Sapeurs de la Garde

## 20.6 Cavalry regiments



*Horse Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard at the Battle of Preussisch Eylau 8 February 1807*

The Imperial Guard cavalry constituted a corps in itself and had its own commander, with seasoned cavalrymen like Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bessières, Frédéric Henri Walther, Étienne Marie Antoine Champion de Nansouty successively at its helm. Augustin Daniel Belliard was also interim commander for a few days in 1814, before giving command to Horace François Bastien Sébastiani de La Porta, who held it for a short while, until Napoleon's abdication in April 1814. During the Hundred Days, there was no overall commander of the Guard cavalry, with command divided between Charles, comte Lefebvre-Desnouettes (light cavalry division) and Claude-Étienne Guyot (heavy cavalry division).

### 20.6.1 Horse Grenadiers

Main article: [Grenadiers à Cheval de la Garde Impériale](#)

The Horse Grenadiers was the senior cavalry regiment of the Guard, and originated from the Consular Guard. Classed as heavy cavalry, the regiment did not wear a cuirass, but was known for its distinctive bearskin head-dress and black horses. It was known by the nickname of "the Gods"; also as "the Big Heels".

### 20.6.2 Chasseurs à Cheval



*Famous painting of an officer of the Chasseurs à Cheval by Théodore Géricault, c.1812*

Main article: [Chasseurs à Cheval de la Garde Impériale](#)

The Regiment of Chasseurs à Cheval (*1<sup>er</sup> Régiment de Chasseurs-a-Cheval de la Garde Impériale*) was also created from the Consular Guard, and ranked second in seniority, although it was a light cavalry regiment. It was the Chasseurs that usually provided personal escort to Napoleon, and he often wore the uniform of the regiment in recognition of this service. The regiment was not only known for its lavish uniform, but its combat history, as well. A second regiment (*2<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Chasseurs-a-Cheval de la Garde*

*Impériale*) was created briefly from *Regiment d'Eclaireurs Lanciers* in 1815.

### 20.6.3 Empress' Dragoons

Main article: Dragons de la Garde Impériale

The dragoon regiments of the line distinguished themselves



A cavalryman of the Empress Dragoons

in the German Campaign of 1805, and so Napoleon decided (in a decree of April 15, 1806) to reorganize the cavalry of the Guard and create within it a regiment of dragoons (*Régiment de Dragons de la Garde Impériale*), made up of three squadrons, headed by 60 officers personally selected by Napoleon. The first squadron was to have 296 men, and be made up of "vélites", whilst the other two were regular squadrons of 476 horsemen. To complete this new unit, each of the 30 dragoon regiments of the line provided 12 men, each of whom had done 10 years of service, and the brigadier, chasseur, and dragoon line regiments provided the *sous-officiers*. This regiment quickly became known as the *Régiment de dragons de l'Impératrice* (the Empress' Dragoons) in tribute to their patroness, Joséphine de Beauharnais, and up until its last member died, the Regiment marked the anniversary of her death.

The unit's numbers rose to 1269 in 1807 with the addition of two new squadrons, and on December 9, 1813, it was attached to the Guard's 3rd regiment of éclaireurs. The dragoons' uniform and weaponry was the same as those of the Guard's mounted grenadiers, only in green rather than blue, and (in place of the bonnet à poil) a copper helmet with a hanging mane in the Neo-Greek *Minerve* style, and a red plume.\*[6]

### 20.6.4 Éclaireurs

Main article: Éclaireurs of the Guard

In the Russian campaign of 1812, the French Army had suffered badly from attacks by the Russian Cossack cavalry. About to fight on French soil for the first time since the French Revolutionary Wars, Napoleon decided to reorganize the Imperial Guard. In Article 1 of a decree of December 4, 1813, he created three regiments of *Éclaireurs à Cheval de la Garde Impériale* (mounted scouts of the Guard) as counterparts to the Cossacks. They were also known as *Hussards Éclaireurs* within the Guard.

They joined the army on January 1, 1814, just in time to participate in the Six Days Campaign, and were disbanded after Napoleon's first abdication.

The *1<sup>er</sup> Régiment d'Éclaireurs à Cheval* was attached to the *Grenadiers à Cheval*, and was thus named the regiment of *Éclaireurs-grenadiers*.

The *2<sup>e</sup> Régiment d'Éclaireurs à Cheval* was attached to the *Dragons de l'Impératrice* (Empress' Dragoons).

The *3<sup>e</sup> Régiment d'Éclaireurs à Cheval* was attached to the *1<sup>er</sup> Régiment de Chevau-Légers-Lanciers*.

### 20.6.5 1st (Polish) Regiment of Lancers

Main article: Polish 1st Light Cavalry Regiment of the Imperial Guard

The regiment called the *Régiment de Chevau-Légers Polonaise de la Garde* was created in 1807 after the 1806 defeat of the Allies, and the French occupation of Poland. In 1811, with the raising of the Dutch Lancers of the Guard, the regiment was renamed *1<sup>er</sup> Régiment de Chevau-Légers-Lanciers de la Garde Impériale*.

### 20.6.6 2nd (Franco-Dutch) Regiment of Lancers

Raised in 1810 from former Dutch Army cavalry units as the *2<sup>e</sup> Régiment de chevau-légers lanciers de la Garde Im-*



*Polish chevaulegers lancers of the Imperial Guard in battle of Peterswaldein 1807*

*périale*, the regiment became known as the **Red Lancers** from their uniform.

### 20.6.7 3rd (Lithuanian) Regiment of Lancers

The regiment of Lithuanian Lancers was raised as the *3<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Chevau-Légers-Lanciers de la Garde Impériale* in Lithuania during the invasion of Russia in 1812, largely from the Lithuanian population in Poland, but was virtually destroyed in the retreat of the same year, and the survivors incorporated into *3<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Eclaireurs*. Incorporated into the regiment was a squadron of Lithuanian Tartars as the *Escadron de Lithuanian Tartares*. \*[7]

### 20.6.8 Mamelukes

Main article: Mamelukes of the Imperial Guard

A squadron of Mamelukes (*Escadron de Mamalukes*) returned with Napoleon from the Egyptian Campaign in 1799. They were inducted into the Guard, and usually attached to the *Chasseurs à Cheval*. The squadron was never increased to a regiment in strength. Over the years their casualties were replaced from French cavalry regiments, or from any vaguely Middle Eastern related nationalities.\*[8]

### 20.6.9 Elite Gendarmes

Further information: *Gendarmes d'élite de la Garde Impériale*

Although technically classed as cavalry of the Guard, *Legion de Gendarmerie d'Elite* troops invariably served in detachments with the General Staff of the Guard, Napoleon's personal headquarters, and the Guard field camps. The Legion included mounted and dismounted troops, the mounted component being two squadrons.



*Cossacks Attacking a squadron of the Guards of Honour, c.1813*

### 20.6.10 Guards of Honour

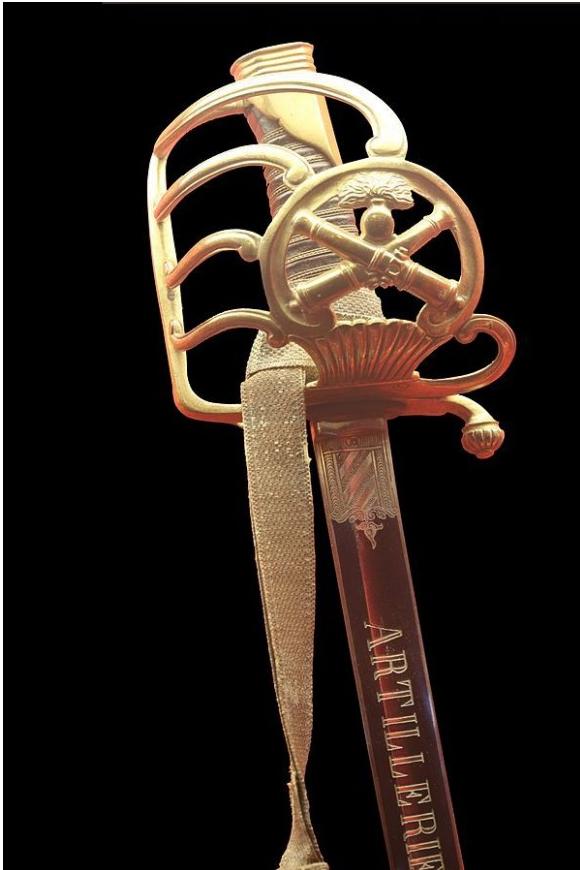
The Guards of Honour (*Régiment de Garde d'Honneur*) were four regiments of light cavalry which Napoleon created in 1813 for his campaigns in Germany to reinforce his Guard cavalry decimated in Russia. The regiments were

dressed in the fashion of the hussars. They served alongside the other Guard cavalry, but were not technically part of the Old, Middle or Young Guard.

Illustrations of cavalry regiments by Adolphe de Chesnel

- Horse Grenadiers
- Horse Artillery
- Chasseurs à Cheval
- Elite Gendarmes
- Lancers
- Mamelukes
- Empress's Dragoons
- Éclaireurs

## 20.7 Artillery of the Guard



Sabre of the mounted artillery of the Guard

Artillery of the Guard included the Foot Artillery Regiment (*Régiment d'Artillerie à Pied de la Garde Impériale*) batteries, Horse Artillery Regiment (*Regiment d'Artillerie à Cheval de la Garde Impériale*) batteries, the Artillery Train of the Guard (*Train d'Artillerie de la Garde Consulaire*)<sup>\*[9]</sup> and the Artillery Park of the Guard (*Parc d'Artillerie de la Garde Impériale*), the latter two created in 1807. Despite shortages in artillery ordnance, in 1813 Napoleon created the *Régiment d'Artillerie à Pied de la Garde Impériale* of the Young Guard (*Jeune Garde*). The *Parc du matériel de la Garde Impériale* was created in 1813 to supplement the meager resources of the *Bataillon du Train des équipages militaires* after the losses of the 1812 campaign.



Gunner of the Horse Artillery of the Imperial Guard

## 20.8 Engineers of the Guard

Although not deployed in combat as a unit, the Engineers (*Genie de la Garde Impériale*) created in 1804 as the engineers of the Consular Guard, participated in combat more so than the combat units of the Guard which were usually held in reserve. By 1810 the Chief Engineer officer of the Guard had a company of *Sapeurs de la Garde* (140 sappers),

all members of the Old Guard. In 1813 this was increased to two companies, and later one battalion of four companies totaling 400 sappers. The 1st and 2nd companies were classed as Old Guard, while the 3rd and 4th companies as the Young Guard.

[9] two regiments in 1813

## 20.9 Sailors of the Guard

Raised from sailors of the French navy who had distinguished themselves, the battalion of *Marins* wore a distinctive, elaborate uniform resembling that of the hussars. Their officers bore titles of rank derived from their seagoing compatriots, and the overall commander of the marines bore the rank of *Capitaine de Vaisseau*. Their duties including manning boats and other watercraft used by the Emperor.

## 20.10 See also

- Voltigeurs, skirmishers members of the Imperial Guard (at times, the Guard had 12 regiments of *Voltigeurs*)

## 20.12 External links

- Infantry of Napoleon's Imperial Guard
- Cavalry of Napoleon's Imperial Guard
- Imperial Guard Artillery

## 20.11 Footnotes

- [1] Georges Blond, *La Grande Armée*, trans. Marshall May (New York: Arms and Armor, 1997), 48, 103, 470
- [2] The retort to a request to surrender may have been "*La Garde meurt, elle ne se rend pas!*" ("The Guard dies, it does not surrender!"). Letters published in *The Times* in June 1932 record that they may have been said by General Michel. The Guard dies, it does not surrender. Cambronne surrenders, he does not die
- [3] D.H. Parry (c. 1900) *Battle of the nineteenth century*, Vol 1 Cassell and Company: London. Waterloo
- [4] Haythornthwaite, Philip (1985). *Napoleon's Guard Infantry*. Long Island City, NY: Osprey Publishing Ltd. p. Loc. 90–91. ISBN 9781780969817.
- [5] Haythornthwaite, Philip (1985). *Napoleon's Guard Infantry* (2). Long Island City, NY: Osprey Publishing Ltd. p. Loc. 90–91. ISBN 9781782000273.
- [6] *Dragoons of the Guard: 1806-1830*. Paul Lindsay Dawson. p. 93. Retrieved 2014-11-19. |first1= missing |last1= in Authors list (help)
- [7] "Lithuanians in the Imperial Guard". Retrieved 2014-11-19. |first1= missing |last1= in Authors list (help)
- [8] "Malmukes in the Imperial Guard". Retrieved 2014-11-19. |first1= missing |last1= in Authors list (help)

# Chapter 21

## Imperial Guard (Napoleon III)



*Grenadier of the Imperial Guard of Napoleon III*

The **Imperial Guard of Napoleon III** was a military corps in the French Army formed by Napoleon III as a re-establishment of his uncle Napoleon I's Imperial Guard, with an updated version of the original uniforms and almost the same privileges.

### 21.1 Origin

The Imperial Guard was formed by a decree of the emperor on 1 May 1854, \*[1] and was made up of 17 regiments of cavalry, artillery and infantry, squadrons of train (supply and administration) and mounted gendarmes, and a division taken from the corps of military engineers. The emperor

added a regiment of Zouaves to the Guard in 1855, selected from the three existing regiments of zouaves first raised in 1830.

### 21.2 Divisional structure

In its original 1854 structure the Imperial Guard comprised a mixed division of two infantry brigades (Grenadiers and Voltigeurs) plus one cavalry brigade of Cuirassiers and Guides. Additional units included two battalions of foot gendarmes, one battalion of Chasseurs a' pied, five batteries of Horse Artillery and a company of Engineers.

During the 1860s the Imperial Guard was expanded to the size of a full army corps. This comprised the following divisions:

- 1st (Voltigeur) Division (four regiments of Voltigeurs plus one Chasseur battalion);
- 2nd (Grenadier) Division (three regiments of Grenadiers plus Guard Zouave Regiment);
- Cavalry Division (comprised light brigade of Guides and Chasseurs; medium brigade of Dragoons and Lancers; heavy brigade of Cuirassiers and Carabiniers; and two batteries of Guard Horse Artillery);
- plus Corps troops (four batteries of Horse Artillery, squadron of artillery train, squadron of regular train). \*[2]

### 21.3 Basis of recruitment

The decree of 1 May 1854 establishing the Imperial Guard required line regiments to nominate experienced soldiers of good character for the new units. This followed the pattern established by Napoleon I, of creating a corps of veterans which could be relied on to provide an elite force that would provide a dependable reserve in battle and be politically loyal in peace. As the Guard was expanded some recruits had to be directly drawn from each annual intake of

conscripts, to make up the numbers required. Guardsmen received higher rates of pay and enjoyed better conditions of service than their counterparts in other regiments.\*[3]

## 21.4 Active service

The Imperial Guard served with distinction in both the Crimean War and the Second Italian War of Independence of 1859. It did not participate in the Mexican Expedition of 1863-67 but remained on garrison duty in Paris. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 the Imperial Guard was present at the Battle of Mars-la-Tour, Battle of Gravelotte and the Siege of Metz. Although an elite corps which now numbered over 20,000, the Guard did not perform up to expectations in 1870. This was mainly due to poor judgement on behalf of its commanders, who at Mars-la-Tour committed guard units piecemeal rather than as a single entity in the tradition of the First Empire. At St. Privat two days later, the Guard was held back from battle by General Charles Bourbaki, to the bitterness of the line troops in the front line.\*[4]

## 21.5 Uniforms

The Imperial Guard retained a number of the more spectacular items of its predecessor Corps under Napoleon I, such as the bearskin headdress of the Grenadiers or the heavily braided dolman of the Horse Artillery. To these were added the common features which by 1870 had come to typify the French Army - notably the red trousers worn by most regiments. The Zouave regiment of the Imperial Guard had their uniform trimmed in yellow rather than the red of the other three zouave regiments, and yellow instead of blue tassels.\*[5]

## 21.6 Disbandment

The bulk of the Imperial Guard was amongst the army led by Marshal Francois Bazaine, which was obliged to capitulate at Metz on 27 October 1870. The Guard was formally abolished by the new French Republican Government, following the fall of the Empire. The 23 depot companies of the infantry of the Imperial Guard were brought together to form the 28th *regiment de march* which fought with distinction during the siege of Paris and subsequently became the 128th Regiment of the Line of the new French Army.

## 21.7 Sundry

A row of houses in the English style were built in Rue Alquié, Vichy for the officers of this unit, which would accompany Napoleon III to Vichy.\*[6] The American officer Philip Kearny was a member of the unit at the 1859 Battle of Solferino.

## 21.8 Notes

- [1] A decree of 24 March that year had formed a specially-picked personal bodyguard for the emperor and his palace which, despite its name - the “cent garde”, or 100 guard - grew to 221 by 1859.
- [2] Stephen Shann, page 8 “French Army 1870-71. Franco-Prussian War 1 Imperial Troops”, ISBN 1 85532 121 1
- [3] Stephen Shann, page 9 “French Army 1870-71. Franco-Prussian War 1 Imperial Troops”, ISBN 1 85532 121 1
- [4] Leone Patry, page 31 “The Reality of War”, ISBN 0-304-35913-0
- [5] “Les Zouaves” - Co. A, 5th New York Volunteer Infantry
- [6] <http://www.vichy-tourisme.com/gb/d-architecture.html>

## 21.9 Sources

- The New American Cyclopaedia: A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge By George Ripley
- NYT

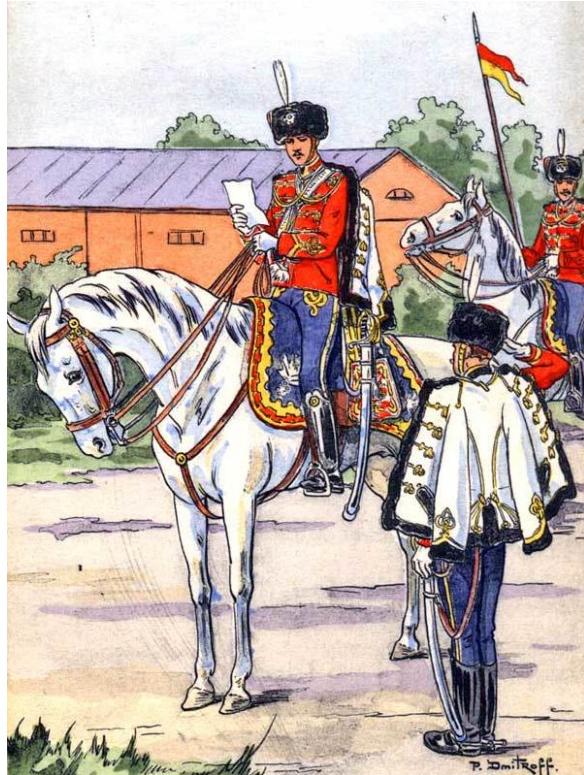
# Chapter 22

## Imperial Guard (Russia)



*Leib Guards reception at the Constantine Palace.*

The Russian **Imperial Guard**, officially known as the **Leib Guard** (Russian: Лейб-гвардия *leyb-gvardiya*, from German *Leib* "Body"; cf. Life Guards / Bodyguard) were military units serving as personal guards of the Emperor of Russia. Peter the Great founded the first such units following the Prussian practice in the 1690s, to replace the politically motivated **Streltsy**. The Imperial Guard subsequently increased in size and diversity to become an elite corps of all branches within the Imperial Army rather than Household troops in direct attendance on the Tsar. Numerous links were however maintained with the Imperial family and the bulk of the regiments of the Imperial Guard were stationed in and around Saint Petersburg in peacetime.



*His Majesty's Life-Guards Hussar Regiment, 1914*

### 22.1 Organization

The final composition of the Russian Imperial Guard at the beginning of 1914 was:

**Guards Corps** St. Petersburg District. Headquarters, St. Petersburg, Millionaya. (Guards units not part of the Guards Corps were the Guards Replacement Cavalry Regiment and Guards Field Gendarme Squadron.)

- **1st Guards Infantry Division.** Headquarters, St. Petersburg, Fontanka

- 1st Brigade: Life-Guards Preobrazhensky Regiment, Life-Guards Semenovsky Regiment

- 2nd Brigade: Life-Guards Izmailovsky Regiment, Life-Guards Egersky Regiment

- 1st Life-Guards Artillery Brigade

- **2nd Guards Infantry Division.** Headquarters, St. Petersburg, Fontanka

- 1st Brigade: Life-Guards Moskovsky Regiment, Life-Guards Grenadier Regiment

- 2nd Brigade: Life-Guards Pavlovsky Regiment, Life-Guards Finliandsky Regiment

- 2nd Life-Guards Artillery Brigade
  - **1st Guards Cavalry Division.** Headquarters, St. Petersburg, Fontanka
    - 1st Brigade: Her Sovereign Majesty Empress Maria Theodorovna's Chevalier Guard Regiment, Life-Guards Horse Regiment
    - 2nd Brigade: His Majesty's Life-Guards Cuirassier Regiment, Her Majesty Empress Maria Theodorovna's Life-Guards Cuirassier Regiment
    - 3rd Brigade: His Majesty's Life-Guards Cosack Regiment, His Imperial Highness the Sovereign Heir and Tsesarevich's Life-Guards Ataman Regiment, Life-Guards Combined Cosack Regiment, 1st His Majesty's Ural Sotnia, 2nd Orenburg Sotnia, 3rd Combined Sotnia, 4th Amur Sotnia
    - 1st Division of Life-Guards Horse-Artillery Brigade
  - **2nd Guards Cavalry Division.** Headquarters, St. Petersburg, Fontanka
    - 1st Brigade: Life-Guards Horse-Grenadier Regiment, Her Majesty Empress Alexandra Theodorovna's Life-Guards Lancer Regiment
    - 2nd Brigade: Life-Guards Dragoon Regiment, His Majesty's Life-Guards Hussar Regiment,
    - 2nd Division of Life-Guards Horse-Artillery Brigade
  - **Guards Rifle Brigade.** Headquarters, St. Petersburg, Fontanka
    - Life-Guards 1st His Majesty's Rifle Regiment
    - Life-Guards 2nd Tsarskoe-Selo Rifle Regiment
    - Life-Guards 3rd His Majesty's Rifle Regiment
    - Life-Guards 4th The Imperial Family's Rifle Regiment
    - Guards Rifle Artillery Battalion
  - Life-Guards Horse Artillery
  - Guards Howitzer Artillery Battalion
  - Life-Guards Sapper Battalion
  - Guards Aviation Company
- Plus the following were part of the **23rd Army Corps**, Warsaw Military District. Headquarters, Warsaw, Poland.
- **3rd Guards Infantry Division.** Headquarters, Warsaw.
    - 1st Brigade: Life-Guards Lithuania Regiment, Emperor of Austria's Life-Guards Kexholm Regiment
    - 2nd Brigade: King Frederick-William III's Life-Guards St.-Petersburg Regiment, Life-Guards Volynski Regiment
    - 3rd Life-Guards Artillery Brigade
  - 2nd Infantry Division
  - Separate Guards Cavalry Brigade: His Majesty's Lancers, Grodno Hussars
  - 3rd Battery of Life-Guards Horse Artillery
  - 23rd Howitzer Artillery Battalion
  - 9th Sapper Battalion

## 22.2 Ranks

Every soldier and officer of the Guard had the style of the *Leib Guard* (Лейб-гвардии ...), for example: *Colonel of the Leib Guard* (Лейб-гвардии полковник). It is a misconception that the monarch himself functioned as the commander of the Leib Guard regiments, so only he and some members of the imperial family could hold a title of Colonel (Polkovnik) of the Guards, but in fact there were many guards officers in the rank of colonel.

Commissioned officers enjoyed a two-grade elevation in the Table of Ranks over regular army officers; this later changed to a one-grade elevation -- first for the **New Guards** then for the rest of the Leib Guard. Following the abolition of the rank of Major in 1884, most grades below VII shifted one position upwards, effectively returning to those of the **Old Guards**.

## 22.3 References

## 22.4 See also

- Imperial Guard
- Table of Ranks
- Russian military ranks
- Toy army of Peter I
- Russian Imperial Guard During the Napoleonic Wars

- THE RUSSIAN ARMY, 1914 by Mark Conrad,  
2001. Divisions.

# Chapter 23

## Guards Corps (German Empire)

For the Haganah Guard Corps, see Guard Corps (Haganah). For the Prussian military unit known as the Prussian Guard, see Gardes du Corps (Prussia).

The Guards Corps / GK (German: *Gardekorps*) was a corps level command of the Prussian and then the Imperial German Armies from the 19th Century to World War I.

The Corps was headquartered in Berlin, with its units garrisoned in the city and nearby towns (Potsdam, Jüterbog, Döberitz). Unlike all other Corps of the Imperial German Army, the Guards Corps did not recruit from a specific area, but from throughout Prussia and the “Imperial Lands” of Alsace-Lorraine.

The Corps served in the Austro-Prussian War. During the Franco-Prussian War it was assigned to the 2nd Army.

In peacetime the Corps was assigned to the II Army Inspectorate but joined the 2nd Army at the start of the First World War.<sup>\*[1]</sup> It was still in existence at the end of the war<sup>\*[2]</sup> in the 4th Army, *Heeresgruppe Kronprinz* Rupprecht on the Western Front.<sup>\*[3]</sup> The Corps was disbanded with the demobilisation of the German Army after World War I.

### 23.1 Austro-Prussian War

The Guards Corps fought in the Austro-Prussian War against Austria in 1866, including the Battle of Königgrätz.

### 23.2 Franco-Prussian War

The Corps served in the Franco-Prussian War against France in 1870–1871 as part of 2nd Army. It saw action in the Battle of Gravelotte, Battle of Sedan and the Siege of Paris (including the Battle of Le Bourget), among other actions.

### 23.3 Peacetime organisation

The 25 peacetime Corps of the German Army (Guards, I - XXI, I - III Bavarian) had a reasonably standardised organisation. Each consisted of two divisions with usually two infantry brigades, one field artillery brigade and a cavalry brigade each.<sup>\*[4]</sup> Each brigade normally consisted of two regiments of the appropriate type, so each Corps normally commanded 8 infantry, 4 field artillery and 4 cavalry regiments. There were exceptions to this rule:

V, VI, VII, IX and XIV Corps each had a 5th infantry brigade (so 10 infantry regiments)

II, XIII, XVIII and XXI Corps had a 9th infantry regiment

I, VI and XVI Corps had a 3rd cavalry brigade (so 6 cavalry regiments)

Each Corps also directly controlled a number of other units. This could include one or more

Foot Artillery Regiment

Jäger Battalion

Pioneer Battalion

Train Battalion

The Guards Corps was considerably above this norm, with 11 infantry regiments (in 5 brigades) and 8 cavalry regiments (in 4 brigades). In addition to the normal 2 Infantry Divisions (1st Guards Infantry and 2nd Guards Infantry Divisions), the Guards Corps also commanded the Guards Cavalry Division, the only peacetime cavalry division in the German Army. It also incorporated an exceptional number of “Corps Troops” units, in particular school and demonstration (*Lehr*) units.

### 23.4 World War I

### 23.4.1 Organisation on mobilisation

On mobilization on 2 August 1914 the Corps was extensively restructured. The Guards Cavalry Division (less 4th Guards Cavalry Brigade) was assigned to the I Cavalry Corps (*Höhere Kavallerie-Kommando 1*);<sup>[7]</sup> the 4th Guards Cavalry Brigade was broken up and its regiments assigned to the divisions as reconnaissance units. The *Lehr* Infantry Battalion was expanded to form the *Lehr* Infantry Regiment.<sup>[8]</sup> It formed 6th Guards Infantry Brigade (with the Guards *Füsiliere* Regiment) and together with the 5th Guards Infantry Brigade formed the 3rd Guards Division of the Guards Reserve Corps. Divisions received engineer companies and other support units from the Corps headquarters.

In summary, the Guards Corps mobilised with 26 infantry battalions, 10 machine gun companies (60 machine guns), 8 cavalry squadrons, 24 field artillery batteries (144 guns), 4 heavy artillery batteries (16 guns), 3 pioneer companies and an aviation detachment.

### 23.4.2 Combat chronicle

On mobilisation, the Guards Corps was assigned to the 2nd Army as part of the right wing of the forces that invaded France and Belgium as part of the Schlieffen Plan offensive in August 1914.

Soon into the war, at the 1st Battle of the Marne, the Prussian Guards were bitterly defeated in an attempt to take French Positions.

In 1917, the corps was stationed on the Aisne River as part of 1st Army, and played an important role in the German defense against the French offensive in that sector.

It was still in existence at the end of the war<sup>\*[2]</sup> in the 4th Army, *Heeresgruppe Kronprinz Rupprecht* on the Western Front.<sup>\*[3]</sup>

## 23.5 Commanders

The Guards Corps had the following commanders during its existence:<sup>\*[12]</sup><sup>\*[13]</sup>

## 23.6 See also

- Franco-Prussian War order of battle
- German Army order of battle (1914)
- German Army order of battle, Western Front (1918)

- List of Imperial German infantry regiments
- List of Imperial German artillery regiments
- List of Imperial German cavalry regiments

## 23.7 References

- [1] Cron 2002, p. 393
- [2] Cron 2002, pp. 88–89
- [3] Ellis & Cox 1993, pp. 186–187
- [4] Haythornthwaite 1996, pp. 193–194
- [5] War Office 1918, p. 239
- [6] Had a third (Horse Artillery) *Abteilung* of three batteries of 4 guns.
- [7] Cron 2002, p. 299
- [8] Busche 1998, p. 4 *Lehr* (meaning teach or training) is usually left untranslated.
- [9] Cron 2002, p. 306
- [10] With a machine gun company.
- [11] 4 heavy artillery batteries (16 heavy field howitzers)
- [12] German War History Accessed: 20 June 2012
- [13] The Prussian Machine Accessed: 20 June 2012

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# Chapter 24

## Imperial Guard (Japan)



A Ukiyo-e print of the Japanese Imperial Guard driving back Russian infantry at the Battle of Shaho during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904.



Original headquarters of the Japanese Imperial Guard, now part of the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo.

The Japanese **Imperial Guard** (近衛師団 *Konoe Shidan*) is an organization which is dedicated to protection of the Emperor of Japan and his family, palaces and other imperial properties. Formed as a unit within the Imperial Japanese Army it was dissolved at the conclusion of World War II and the formal surrender of Japan.

In 1947 a civil Imperial Guard was formed. It became a formal part of the Japanese National Police Agency in 1957.

### 24.1 Imperial Guard of the Imperial Japanese Army

When the Emperor Meiji assumed all the powers of state during the Meiji Restoration he ordered the formation of an Imperial Guard to protect himself and the Japanese imperial family. In 1867 the Imperial Guard was formed from loyal retainers and former samurai. This unit would then go on to form the nucleus of the new Imperial Japanese Army.

By the 1870s the Imperial Guard, which had been organized and trained along French Military lines, consisted of 12,000 officers and men. It was organized into the 1st Guards Infantry Brigade which had the 1st and 2nd Regiments. The 2nd Guards Brigade contained the 3rd and 4th regiments. However following the decisive German vic-

tory in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, the French defeat prompted the Japanese government to recruit some of the victorious German officers to retrain and reorganize the Imperial Guards on the Prussian Gardes du Corps model. The Imperial troops first saw action in the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877.

By 1885 the Imperial Guards was one of seven divisions within the Imperial Japanese Army. Each division consisted of four regiments containing two battalions. The Imperial Guard division was based in garrisons around Tokyo but it recruited nationally.

The Imperial Guards saw little action in Manchuria during the Sino-Japanese War, but were used to invade Taiwan in May 1895 following the proclamation of the Republic of Formosa. The division suffered relatively low battle casualties, but lost a significant proportion of its strength from malaria and other diseases. By the end of the campaign it was down to half strength.

After the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, a further Guard Brigade was formed from indigenous Formosans. In 1920 the Guards Cavalry Regiment, Guards Field Artillery Regiment, Guards Engineer Battalion, Guards Transport Battalion, plus other Guards service units were added.

From 1937 to 1939 the Guards Engineer Battalion was expanded into a regiment along with the Guards Transport Battalion.

### 24.1.1 Pacific War



*In 1942, 700 Imperial Guards died here at Gemencheh Bridge, Malaya during the Battle of Muar. (Picture taken in 1945)*

In September 1939, the division was split into the 1st and 2nd Guards Brigades.

The 1st Guards Brigade, which contained the 1st and 2nd Guards Infantry Regiments, the cavalry regiment, and half of the support units, was transferred to South China. Here it became known as the Mixed Guards Brigade. In October 1940, it joined other Japanese units occupying French Indo-China. In April 1941 the Mixed Guards Brigade returned to Tokyo but it did not rejoin the Imperial Guards Division.

The 2nd Guards Brigade, which contained 3rd and 4th Guards Regiments, also went to China. In 1940, it went to Shanghai before being posted to Hainan Island. In June 1941, the 5th Guards Infantry Regiment joined the 2nd Guards Brigade becoming the Imperial Guard Division again. It later saw action in the Battles of Malaya and Singapore with Tomoyuki Yamashita's 25th Army.

In May 1943, all designated Imperial Guard units were renamed again. The Mixed Guards Brigade in Tokyo became the 1st Guards Division (which now consisted of the 1st, 2nd, 6th Guard Regiments) and the Imperial Guard Division became the 2nd Guards Division. The 3rd Guards Division, which never left Japan, was formed in 1944. It consisted of the 8th, 9th and 10th Guards Regiments. Sources do not agree if there ever was a 7th Guard Regiment.

All military Imperial Guard Divisions were dissolved at the end of World War II.

However in 1947, the "Imperial Guard" name was revived

as part of the National Police Agency. This new organisation would serve in the National Public Safety Commission and protect the Imperial Family of Japan.

### 24.1.2 War crimes

In Malaya and Singapore, the Imperial Guard was involved in several notorious Japanese war crimes such as the Parit Sulong Massacre and the Sook Ching massacre. Lieutenant General Takuma Nishimura, who was sentenced to life imprisonment by a British military court in relation to the Sook Ching killings, was later convicted of war crimes by an Australian Military Court in relation to the Parit Sulong massacre. He was executed by hanging on June 11, 1951.\* [1]

### 24.1.3 Uniform

Main article: Imperial Japanese Army Uniforms

Until 1939, the Cavalry of the Imperial Guard wore a French style parade uniform consisting of a dark-blue tunic with red Brandenburg braiding, a red kepi and red breeches. The red kepi had a white plume with a red base. Prior to the general adoption of khaki by the Japanese Army during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), an all-white linen uniform had been worn in hot weather.

The Infantry of the Imperial Guard wore a dark blue uniform with white leggings for both parade and service wear until 1905. It was distinguished from the uniform of line infantry by a red band and piping on the peaked service cap (instead of yellow). Officers wore a dark blue tunic with five rows of black mohair frogging and dark blue breeches with a red stripe down each seam.

Following the adoption of a khaki service dress, the Guard Infantry wore this on all occasions, although officers retained the blue and red uniform for certain ceremonial occasions when not parading with troops.

In the field, the army's standard khaki uniform was worn by all Imperial Guard units from 1905 to 1945. Guard units were distinguished by a wreathed star in bronze worn on the headgear, in contrast to the plain five pointed star worn by other units.

## 24.2 Imperial Guard of the National Police Agency

In 1947 the Imperial guard Headquarters (皇宮警察本部 *Kōgū-Keisatsu Honbu*-literal translation: Palace Police Headquarters) was created under the control of the Home

Ministry from the Imperial Household Ministry. It came under the aegis of the National Police Agency of Japan in 1954.

The agency consists of over 900 security police personnel who provide personal security for the Emperor, Crown Prince and other members of the Imperial Family of Japan. The agency is also responsible for protecting imperial properties, such as the Tokyo Imperial Palace, Kyoto Imperial Palace, and Shōsōin Imperial Repository at Nara and the Imperial Villas of Katsura and Shugakuin in Kyoto, Hayama, Kanagawa and Nasu, Tochigi.\*[2]

The Imperial Guard also maintains a 14-horse mounted police unit for use by guards of honour at state ceremonies. In addition to their security duties, the Imperial Guard is also responsible for fire-fighting within the grounds of the Palace, and maintains fire engines and trained staff of this purpose.

The NPA Imperial Guards wear a dark blue or a blue-grey police uniform with white gloves while on duty. They also wear white pistol belts, lanyards, helmets, boot laces or leggings.

#### 24.2.1 Gallery

### 24.3 See also

- Imperial Guard
- Manchukuo Imperial Guards
- Imperial Japanese Army

### 24.4 References

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### 24.5 External links

- Imperial Guards Homepage (Japanese)

# Chapter 25

## Kebur Zabagna

**Kebur Zabagna** or **Zebanya** (Amharic: ክቡር ዘበኛ /kəbur zābān্যa/, lit. “Honorable Guard”) was the Ethiopian Imperial Guard. Also known as the **First Division**, this unit served the dual purposes of providing security for the Emperor of Ethiopia, and being an elite infantry division. It was not, however, part of the organizational structure of the Ethiopian regular army as it was part of the *Zebagna*, the Addis Ababa Guard. The Kebur Zabagna was based at Addis Ababa.

### 25.1 Overview

Richard Pankhurst dates the formation of the Imperial Bodyguard (previously known as the *Mehal Sefari*) to 1917, when the Regent Ras Tafari (later the Emperor Haile Selassie) assembled a unit under his direct control from men who had trained in the British army in Kenya as well as a few who had served under the Italians in Tripoli.<sup>[1]</sup> In 1930 as *Negus* he invited a Belgian military mission to train and modernize the Ethiopian military, which included the Kebur Zabagna. The unit was organized in three battalions of trained regular infantry armed with rifles, machineguns and mortars; one battalion consisted of men from the earlier *mahal safari*. The Kebur Zabagna also had one heavy machine-gun company. It was commanded by Ethiopian graduates of Saint Cyr, the French military academy, at the time of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia.<sup>[2]</sup> As a unit, the Imperial Bodyguard only participated in the Battle of Maychew (31 March 1936), but afterwards many of its members joined the various groups of the Ethiopian resistance.

Following the return of Emperor Haile Selassie to Ethiopia, the Kebur Zabagna was reconstituted, and a Swedish military mission aided in its training. Men for the Kagnew Battalion, which fought in the Korean War, were drawn from the Imperial Bodyguard.<sup>[3]</sup>

“It remained the elite force of the empire,” notes historian Bahru Zewde, “until discredited in the wake of the attempted coup of 1960.” That unsuccessful coup had been

planned by its commander Brigadier-General Mengistu Neway, and his brother Germame Neway.<sup>[4]</sup> In 1961 it numbered nine battalions; in 1969 some 7,000 men. In 1974 the Commander was Major-General Tafessa Lemma. The Kebur Zabagna was disbanded after the Derg consolidated their hold on Ethiopia.

### 25.2 Notes

- [1] Richard Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie University Press, 1968), p. 562
- [2] Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, second edition (Oxford: James Currey, 2001), p. 148
- [3] Bahru Zewde, *A History*, p. 186
- [4] Paul B. Henze, *Layers of Time* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 254f.

# Chapter 26

## Kheshig

**Kheshig** (Khishig, Keshig, Keshichan) (Mongolian for favored or blessed) were the imperial guard for Mongol royalty in the Mongol Empire, particularly for the rulers like the Genghis Khan and his wife Börte. Their primary purpose was as a bodyguard for the emperors and rulers and to protect them during the day and night. They were divided into 2 areas, the day guard and the night guard, Khevtuul. They were distinct from the regular army and would not go to battle with them, instead staying back on guard duty. Their supreme commander was called *Cherbi*.

Because the Mongol Empire spanned most of Eurasia, its impacts on Mongol controlled-areas led to the creation of imperial guards like the Keshik. Khishig was the term used for the palace guards of the Great Mogul Emperors in India, and also for the matchlocks and sabres, which were changed weekly from Akbar the Great's armoury for the royal use. The royal guards in Persia who watched the King's person at night were also called Keshikchi.\*[1]

The modern Mongolian clan Khishigten are believed to be descendants of the keshik of the Northern Yuan monarchs.

### 26.1 History

The assassination of the leaders of rival Mongol tribes was a common occurrence thanks to the ever-shifting loyalties and conflicting interests at play within Mongol tribal politics. The father of Genghis Khan Yesugei, for example, was unwittingly poisoned by one of his enemies. The risk was especially high at night since the ger that Mongol nomads traditionally sleep in lacked a solid wall, and so a sword or spear could easily penetrate the walls and kill the subject inside. As a result, the Mongol and Turkic monarchs in Mongolia typically had personal guards. The Kerait khan Toghoril (Wang Khan) had an imperial guard, Torguud. According to an oral tradition, their descendants could be Torghut people. After the defeat of Wang Khan in 1203, Genghis established the kheshig. The kheshig consisted mainly of sworn personal followers.\*[2]

At first, this consisted of 70 day guards (Torguud or tung-haut) and 80 night guards (khevtuul).\*[3] During the reign of Genghis, it seems to have been divided into four groups, commanded by the four generals Mukhulai, Chormaqan, Bogorchu and Borokhula. Members of the kheshig outranked almost any other military officers in the Mongol Empire. As it was extremely well paid, the vocation was a popular one, and the numbers of Kheshig grew rapidly, to the extent that they were only normally on duty for three days in succession. In light of this, the word kheshig refers favor or blessing in the Mongolian language. Membership in the kheshig was regarded as a supreme honor and was an alternative to the necessity of hostage taking for noblemen.\*[4] In the early days the guard was composed of 1,000 men. By the middle of Genghis Khan's reign, they had expanded to a **tumen** (10,000 men) commanded by Nayagha, an uncle of Bayan of the Baarin.\*[5]

The Khesig was originally consisted of only Mongolians. As the Empire expanded rapidly, Genghis Khan's successors recruited Chinese, Kipchak, Georgian, Armenian, Alan, Korean, Italian and Russian units.\*[6]\*[7]\*[8] Since the kheshig was personal appanage of a monarch, his successors did not inherit them. Instead, the kheshigs of deceased Emperors took care of their lords' families and assisted households. But Güyük Khan took most of his father Ögedei's old kheshig.

Kublai Khan (r.1260-1294) restricted the functions of kheshig, and created a new imperial bodyguard. However, his kheshig were still ruled by descendants of Genghis Khan's four assistants. He had a body guard of 12,000 kheshigs.\*[9]

### 26.2 Units

#### 26.2.1 Primary units

- **Torguud** (Tunghaut) are the day guard of the Mongol khans. They were always close to their rulers during

their conquests or daily-life. Famous Subutai was in the kheshig in his early years.

- **Khevtuul** are the night guard of the Kheshig, and were tasked with protecting the emperors and rulers while they slept in their yurt. The name “khevtuul”, literally means “ones that are lying” on something like a bed or floor in the Mongolian language, implying that they have something to do with night time.

## 26.2.2 Supplementary units

- **Khorchin** were a battle guard of the Khagans. The word Khorchin refers to quiver bearers.\*[10] Scholars believe that the Mongolian clan Khorchin is related to them.
- **Asud guard.** They consisted fully of Alans from northern Caucasus. At first, they served the Mongol monarchs as auxiliaries in battle after the Mongol invasion of Volga Bulgaria in 1236. The Great Khan Kublai organized them into the imperial guard. Their descendants formed the modern Mongolian tribe, Asud.
- **Ever-faithful Russian life-guard.** One of Kublai's successors, Tugh Temür formed a unit of Russians near Dadu in 1330.\*[11]
- **Kipchak and Qanqli guards.** Sometime after 1216 Kipchak and Qanqli prisoners served the Mongols in North China as warriors and kharchins (clarified fermented mare's milk makers). Under Kublai Khan, the Kipchaks formed special guards corps, and the Qanqli guard was formed in 1308.

## 26.3 See also

- Mongol Empire
- Mongol military tactics and organization
- Society of the Mongol Empire
- Organization of state under Genghis Khan

## 26.4 References

- [1] Henry Hoyle Howorth *History of the Mongols: From the 9th to the 19th Century*, p.399
- [2] David Christian *A history of Russia, Central Asia, and Mongolia*, p.396

- [3] Stephen G. Haw *Marco Polo's China*, p.166
- [4] George Lane *Daily life in the Mongol empire*, p.97
- [5] Richard A. Gabriel *The great armies of antiquity*, p.337
- [6] *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, p.111
- [7] David M. Farquhar *The Government of China Under Mongolian Rule: A Reference Guide* p.272
- [8] Otto Harrassowitz *Archivum Eurasiae medii aeivi [i.e. aevi].*, p.36
- [9] Henry Hoyle Howorth *History of the Mongols: From the 9th to the 19th Century*, p.398
- [10] Richard A. Gabriel *Genghis Khan's greatest general Subutai the valiant*, p.37
- [11] Vincent Chen *Sino-Russian relations in the seventeenth century*, p.34

## 26.5 External links

- Great Mongol Empire
- Mongol State Structure and Organization

# Chapter 27

## Household Division

**Household Division** is a term used principally in the Commonwealth of Nations to describe a country's most elite or historically senior military units, or those military units that provide ceremonial or protective functions associated directly with the head of state.

### 27.1 Historical development

In medieval Western Europe, the most able warriors were pressed into service as the personal bodyguards to the monarch and other members of the royal or imperial household; as a result, Household troops are commonly referred to as Guards. From this origin developed the practice of designating a country's finest military units as forming Household or Guards regiments.

Members of the Household Divisions would accompany the monarch to protect him when he ventured into the public. Hence, as kingdoms grew larger and more politically complex, the Household Divisions naturally became part of the public spectacle of the state. Their uniforms, weapons and even personal attributes such as height were selected to engender awe on ceremonial occasions. The Household Divisions thus developed a tradition of providing a theatrical ceremonial accompaniment to important national events.

The prestige of serving directly with the monarch created an incentive for the Household Divisions to become dominated by members of the upper classes, irrespective of their actual skills as soldiers. From this development comes the association of Household Divisions with wealth, snobbery, and discrimination, which persisted until the middle of the 20th century.\*[1]

Today, members of the remaining Household Divisions continue to enjoy a certain social prestige within the armed forces and the state at large. They do, however, continue to fulfil their ceremonial roles at state occasions, and to uphold the more enduring traditions of military service.

### 27.2 Australia



*President Barack Obama reviews Australia's Federation Guard in the forecourt of Parliament House during his visit to Australia in November 2011.*

- Australia's Federation Guard

Since their formation in 2000 in commemoration of the centenary of Australian federation, Australia's Federation Guard have taken on many of the historically ceremonial roles associated with Household Divisions of other Commonwealth countries.

### 27.3 Canada

- Governor General's Horse Guards
- Governor General's Foot Guards
- Canadian Grenadier Guards

The Canadian Household regiments are all militia rather than a regular force units. The armoured Governor General's Horse Guards is the most senior of all militia regiments, while the Governor General's Foot Guards and

the Canadian Grenadier Guards are respectively the first and second most senior infantry militia regiments. All three regiments provide both active soldiers and ceremonial guards.

The Governor General's Horse Guards are Canada's sole Household Cavalry regiment; the Governor General's Foot Guards and the Canadian Grenadier Guards combine on an ad hoc basis to form the infantry Ceremonial Guard. Prior to 1970, the four regular battalions of the now disbanded Canadian Guards provided the infantry element of the Household Division.



## 27.4 India

- President's Bodyguard
- Brigade of the Guards

Although India is a republic, its history as an empire within the British Empire has left it with a host of institutions of quasi-imperial forms: India thus retains a Household Division, despite recognising the authority of no royal household. The President's Bodyguard, which was founded in 1773 as the Governor's Troop of Moghuls and renamed the Governor General's Bodyguard during the colonial era, is the country's Household Cavalry regiment, with ceremonial soldiers on horseback and combat soldiers in armoured vehicles or heliborne roles. The Brigade of the Guards is the country's Foot Guard regiment, with special responsibilities to the Presidential palace.

## 27.5 United Kingdom

*Septem juncta in uno* (Seven joined in one)

- Household Cavalry (composed of the Life Guards and the Blues and Royals)
- Foot Guards (composed of the Grenadier Guards, the Coldstream Guards, the Scots Guards, the Irish Guards, and the Welsh Guards)

The seven regiments that form the Household Division in the United Kingdom are all currently units of the regular army. In 2004, however, the Minister of Defence announced that the Foot Guards would gain a reserve (or Territorial Army) battalion, the London Regiment. The London regiment are however according to HM Regulations for the Household Division neither Foot Guards nor household troops. The Household Division and the King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery are collectively referred to as

*Life Guards performing ceremonial drills both on horseback and with vehicles in London's Hyde Park*

the Household Troops. They are under the command of the Major-General Commanding the Household Division, who is also General Officer Commanding London District. From 1950–1968, the term Household Brigade was used.

The connection with the Sovereign remains important ceremonially and operationally, and the Household Division provides both ceremonial and operational support for the Crown. One of the five Foot Guards regiments is selected each year to troop their colour before the Sovereign at Trooping the Colour annually in June. This ceremony includes march-pasts in slow and quick time, and is attended by the Household Troops. Orders for the Household Division are conveyed through the Royal Household to the Major-General via the Field Officer in Brigade Waiting (for the Foot Guards) and the Silver Stick in Waiting (for the Household Cavalry).

The Household Division provides two battalions and incremental companies at any one time tasked for public duties, which include the protection of the Sovereign. In the event of crisis or war it is believed that one of these would be responsible for protecting the person of the Sovereign and facilitating his or her evacuation if this were necessary. In the Second World War a special unit, known as Coats Mission, was entrusted with this latter task. In the 1960s, war plans apparently envisaged evacuating the Sovereign to the Royal Yacht Britannia. It would appear that, contrary to persistent rumour, there were no plans for the Sovereign to join the Prime Minister at the Corsham bunker complex known as Turnstile.

### 27.5.1 Music and the British Household Division

Music is an essential component of ceremonial regimental life in the UK. Each of the five Foot Guards regiments has its own band and its own regimental quick and slow marches. These are on show in the Changing of the Guard ceremony at Buckingham Palace. Similarly, both the Household Cavalry regiments have their own mounted bands and also their own regimental quick and slow marches.

The Massed Bands and Massed Mounted Bands feature annually at Trooping the Colour. The term “Massed Bands” denotes the amalgamated bands of all five Foot Guards regiments, and numbers around 250 musicians. The term “Massed Mounted Bands” denotes the amalgamated bands of the two Household Cavalry regiments.

The mounted bands wear colourful state dress and dark blue peaked equestrian caps. They are led by two musicians on large Shire horses used as drum horses. Since their hands are occupied with the drumsticks, they must work horses' reins with their feet.

## 27.6 Malaysia

- 1st Battalion, Royal Malay Regiment of the Malaysian Army
- Mounted Ceremonial Squadron, Royal Armoured Corps

The Royal Malay Regiment serves as the Household Regiment of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and the Raja Permaisuri Agong, the King and Queen of Malaysia, together with Royal Armoured Corps Mounted Ceremonial Squadron, the ceremonial royal cavalry escort unit. Their responsibilities are at the Istana Negara, Kuala Lumpur as the Royal Household Troops and Guards.

## 27.7 See also

- Grenadier Guards Band
- Coldstream Guards Band
- Irish Guards Band
- Scots Guards Band
- Welsh Guards Band

## 27.8 References

- [1] “Oldest regiment serves dual role”. BBC News. 25 January 2006. Retrieved 21 April 2006.

## 27.9 External links

- AU – Australia’s Federation Guard (AFG)
- CA – The Governor General’s Horse Guards
- CA – The Governor General’s Foot Guards
- CA – The Canadian Grenadier Guards
- IN – The President’s Bodyguard
- IN – The Brigade of the Guards
- UK – HQ Household Division
- UK – The Household Cavalry
- UK – The King’s Troop, Royal Horse Artillery
- British Army Music

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